

GAMBA GRASS SNAPSHOT 2022

The Gamba Management Framework

The Framework aligns the strategic and actionable items of the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security providing a holistic approach to gamba management, fire mitigation for fuel load reduction and infestation control. It is underpinned by the statutory Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020–2030 established under the *Weeds Management Act 2001* (administered by the Weed Management Branch).

To demonstrate progress towards achieving outcomes of the 2020–2030 gamba plan, each Framework element in this snapshot summarises key achievements across 2021–2022.

WEED ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

WEED AND
FIRE WORKING
GROUP

GAMBA FIRE
MITIGATION
GROUP

GAMBA
ARMY

MAPPING AND
PLANNING

GAMBA
ACTION
PROGRAM

FIRE READY
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

ABORIGINAL RANGER
& ENVIRONMENT
GRANTS

Weed Advisory Committee

The Weed Advisory Committee, is continuing to oversee implementation of the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020–2030.

Implementation of this plan is well underway and typically on track. Annual reporting against implementation of the plan up to 30 June 2022 can be found at nt.gov.au/gamba

Weed and Fire Working Group

The Weed and Fire Working Group was established in 2020 to co-ordinate the management of weeds and fire on government land, including gamba grass. This group is continuing to meet quarterly and includes agencies with land management responsibilities such as Parks and Wildlife and the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics.

Gamba Mapping – Litchfield National Park

Charles Darwin University / National Environmental Science Program (NESP) researchers, in conjunction with the Weed Management Branch, concluded the helicopter survey of Litchfield National Park in April 2022. The distribution maps showed that gamba grass has substantially spread in the park since the last survey in 2014.

Researchers completed a gamba prioritisation process for the park, modelling the potential spread over the next 10 years. Costed management scenarios were also developed to estimate the cost of protecting priority assets within the park. Significant future investment in intensive gamba management is needed, to protect environmental and tourism assets within the Litchfield National Park.

The NTG contributed \$100,000 to this two-year research project.

Gamba Army

Co-ordinated by Territory Natural Resource Management, the Gamba Army has continued for a second year with \$500,000 in funding from the NTG. Over 2021/22 the Gamba Army conducted 2910 person hours of spraying across 80 different land parcels (encompassing nearly 8000 Ha) across a range of land tenures in Darwin and the Darwin rural area. Some of the sites managed include:

- Litchfield National Park
- Charles Darwin National Park
- Casuarina Coastal Reserve and adjoining hospital block
- Knuckey Lagoons Conservation Reserve
- Top End and Mickett Creek Shooting Complexes
- Howard Springs Pine Forest
- Numerous Vacant Crown land blocks.

For more information on the Gamba Army visit: territorynrm.org.au/gamba-army

Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit

The Gamba Fire Mitigation Unit was established in October 2020. Key achievements include:

- Commencement of the Fire Ready Assistance Program.
- Ongoing co-ordination with Bushfires NT and NT Fire and Rescue Service – as an example, 53 land parcels threatened by imminent bushfire risk to life and property, were referred to the relevant fire authority.

An online **'Report Gamba'** tool has been developed for use by anyone that would like to report gamba of concern / make a complaint.



View online at nt.gov.au/gamba

Gamba Action Program

The Gamba Action Program (GAP) was open from 3 December 2021 to 30 April 2022. The GAP is a herbicide assistance program, providing 5L or 10L containers of herbicide to landholders for gamba grass control. Spray units are also loaned out for gamba grass control.

During this 2021/22 wet season, 2215 participants utilised the program. The GAP will recommence in December 2022.

Fire Ready Assistance Program

The Fire Ready Assistance Program commenced in early 2021. The Northern Territory Government committed \$50,000 to support this program which provides assistance to rural landholders to manage gamba grass who are willing, but unable to manage their gamba. During 2021/22, 27 landholders were assisted through the Fire Ready Assistance Program. This program will be funded annually and will assist these landholders to install fire breaks and manage gamba fuel load.

Gamba compliance

Gamba compliance was carried out over the 2021–2022 wet season to assess compliance against the requirements of the Weed Management Plan for Gamba Grass 2020–2030.

Class A Eradication Zone

A gamba grass mapping and monitoring program has been developed to track the eradication of gamba grass across the Class A zone. This program can be found online at nt.gov.au/gamba.

An assessment carried out at June 2022 has identified 650 gamba grass management units across the Class A zone which will be tracked towards eradication. The current progress towards eradication is shown below:



These 650 units are located across 59 individual properties and a number of roads and highways. Of these 59 properties:



For more information, read the Gamba Grass Annual Report 2022 at nt.gov.au/gamba.

Aboriginal Ranger & Environment Grants

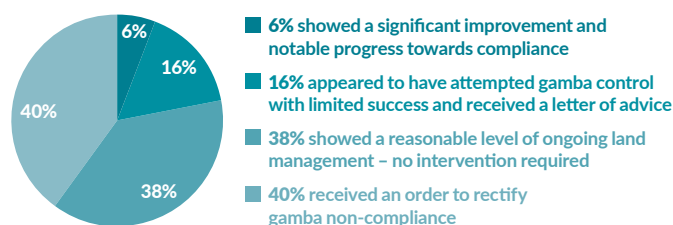
Includes support through grant funding to Aboriginal rangers and local councils among others, to purchase capital items and to support project activities (land management and conservation).

In the case of the Aboriginal Ranger Grant Program, as much as \$3.6 million of grant funding has been directed towards weed management - either as standalone or integrated land management programs - since it was established in 2017. This includes approximately \$500,000 directed towards weed management for 2021/22. Whilst mimosa management is the greater part of the weed management, the gamba component is significant.

Class B Control Zone

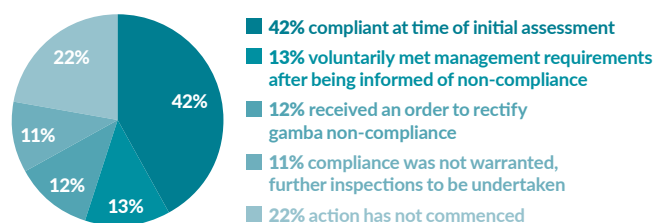
Across the Class B zone an area of approximately 12% is estimated as being affected by gamba grass. Compliance across this zone has been summarised as follows:

Darwin rural area properties (affected by gamba grass)



The overall risk of gamba impact improved by 63% on average for the Darwin rural area, following enforcement action.

Darwin and surrounding area (excluding Darwin rural area)



Katherine properties

In 2021/22 around Katherine, 14 properties within the Class B zone have documented active control programs, with a focus on <3 Ha blocks. Of these <3 Ha properties, two are now verified as locally eradicated and two properties are under active control.

Fire Ready Week 2022

Approximately 100 people attended.

