



Alison Anderson

MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES,
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

25 November 2008

Gamba Grass Declared Under Weeds Management Act

Environment Minister Alison Anderson today announced that Gamba Grass will be declared a weed under the Weeds Management Act.

The decision implements a key recommendation from the Environment and Sustainable Development Sessional Committee's *Report of Invasive Species and Management Programs in the Northern Territory*, which was released in May this year.

Ms Anderson said the declaration will be implemented in a zoned approach that will allow most pastoralists who use Gamba Grass as pasture to continue, while preventing further spread of the invasive species.

"Declaring Gamba Grass a weed will protect our natural environment for the future, as well as reducing the threat to people and property by wildfires," Ms Anderson said.

"We have focused on developing a response to Gamba Grass that considers not only the environmental risks of the species, but which recognises and supports those landholders who use it as cattle fodder.

"This is about working with property owners in a co-operative manner, rather than taking a heavy-handed approach. The next step will be the development of a Gamba Weed Management Plan in consultation with the community."

Gamba Grass was introduced into the Northern Territory as a pasture species in 1931, and was planted widely in pastoral and agricultural areas of the Top End.

"Gamba Grass can fuel extremely destructive grass fires during the dry season up to eight times the intensity of native grass fires," Ms Anderson said.

There will be two 'Gamba declaration zones'. Landholders in the 'BC zone', taking in the area between Darwin and Katherine, will be required to use their best endeavours to manage and control the spread of gamba grass. Landholders in the 'AC zone', covering the rest of the Territory, will need to start working on eradication of gamba on their properties. New plantings and importation of seed will be prohibited throughout the Territory.

A draft management plan for Gamba Grass will be released for public comment in 2009.

For more information on the control of Gamba Grass and for maps of zoned areas, go to www.nt.gov.au/gamba.

Contact: Shannon McRae 0419 340 735

