



STRATEGIC ▶

BuffelpalooSA 2026

Day 2: Strategic Workshop Summary

BuffelpalooSA 2026: Day 2

The workshop session focused on identifying the key stakeholders that should be involved in a future buffel grass governance structure, exploring the purpose and functions of a steering committee and taskforce, and testing participant views on priorities for a proposed State Buffel Grass Coordinator role.

The discussion highlighted strong support for a coordinated, strategic, statewide approach underpinned by advocacy, governance, operational coordination and secure long-term funding.

There was broad consensus around several major themes:

- Buffel grass management requires a statewide, coordinated approach involving government, Traditional Owners, industry, researchers and community organisations.
- A strategic steering committee should focus on planning, advocacy and securing resources.
- An operational taskforce is needed to coordinate implementation and provide technical leadership.
- Governance structures should be inclusive but streamlined enough to remain effective.
- Long-term funding is regarded as the single greatest priority and the key enabling factor for future success.
- Reviewing and implementing the Buffel Grass Strategic Plan should be an early focus for the proposed State Coordinator role.

Overall, the session showed strong alignment among participants regarding the need for improved coordination, stronger advocacy, effective governance and sustainable investment to address buffel grass management across South Australia.

Opening talks

Opening & context: Kim Krebs

Kim noted that the Alinytjara Wilurara region has been responding to buffel grass invasion and helping to drive state-wide coordination since 2008, with a strong focus on protecting the cultural and environmental values of the APY Lands and preventing further spread into the Great Victoria Desert and Maralinga Tjarutja Lands. These objectives remain consistent.

Participants heard that while the declaration of buffel grass in 2015 led to development of the State Buffel Grass Strategy, coordinated statewide leadership has been inconsistent since then. Much of the momentum has come through informal collaborations such as the Buffel Taskforce and committed individuals rather than formal structures. Participants heard that significant progress was achieved following the declaration of buffel grass in 2015, including the development of the State Buffel Grass Strategy by the SA Buffel Taskforce, establishment of statewide coordination mechanisms and increased collaboration between government agencies, regional bodies and stakeholders. However, after a number of years, momentum was lost, and collaboration increasingly relied on informal networks, voluntary contributions and the commitment of individual organisations and practitioners.

Participants considered that future governance arrangements should build on the foundations established through earlier initiatives while providing greater continuity, accountability and resourcing to ensure coordinated statewide action can be sustained over the long term.

Kim outlined how AW secured funding in 2023 to re-establish statewide coordination, improve surveillance, undertake targeted control activities, raise awareness and support research. A key outcome of that investment was the submission of nominations for both a Key Threatening Process listing and Weeds of National Significance (WoNS) listing. These nominations were described as pivotal opportunities for achieving national recognition and investment.

The workshop was framed around a belief that South Australia has not yet lost control of buffel grass but is approaching a critical point where coordinated action is urgently needed.

Statewide Coordination Update: Harry Missen (PIRSA)

Harry Missen (PIRSA) provided an update on the Minister's announcement regarding ongoing support for statewide coordination. PIRSA has been proposed to lead the next phase of coordination, with funding currently available to establish a short-term coordinator role focussed on priority actions and developing a stronger case for long-term investment.

Initial priorities for the coordinator include:

- Maintaining and strengthening the State Buffel Grass Steering Committee.
- Reviewing and updating the statewide business case.
- Securing longer-term funding commitments.
- Coordinating partner contributions.
- Seeking Australian Government investment opportunities.
- Positioning South Australia to participate in national initiatives.

Discussion highlighted that the immediate role of the coordinator is not necessarily delivery, but generating political support, building partnerships and securing funding for sustained on-ground programs. Participants noted that while public messaging may have suggested longer-term commitments, current funding only secures the role until the end of the financial year.

Key Themes from Day 1: Rebecca Howard

Rebecca Howard reviewed outputs from the first day of the conference, identifying several recurring themes:

Buffel grass is more than a weed

Participants recognised buffel grass as an ecosystem-transforming species that affects biodiversity, cultural values, fire regimes and landscape function.

Climate change will worsen the problem

Climate modelling presented during Day 1 demonstrated that suitable habitat for buffel grass is likely to expand significantly under future climate conditions. Participants were reminded that approximately 69.5% of South Australia is already considered highly or very highly suitable habitat.

Early intervention delivers the greatest return

A consistent message was that protecting currently buffel-free areas and investing in early intervention

provides the greatest return on investment compared to managing widespread infestations.

Long-term commitment is essential

Short-term projects and one-off control programs were widely viewed as being significantly less effective. Participants stressed the need for long-term investment, governance and commitment.

Mapping and monitoring are critical

Improved understanding of distribution, spread pathways and asset risk mapping was highlighted as fundamental to making better strategic decisions.

Stakeholder Identification and Governance Structure

Participants undertook a collaborative exercise to identify organisations, agencies and groups that should be involved in buffel grass management and strategic decision-making. The intent was not only to identify who should be represented but also to determine where influence, expertise and responsibility sit across government, industry, Traditional Owner groups, researchers and community organisations.

Stakeholder Analysis

Government

Participants noted that government agencies were generally well represented but identified several additional organisations that may need involvement. Agencies discussed included:

- PIRSA
- DEW
- CFS
- DEM
- National Parks
- Landscape Boards
- Various state government agencies
- Department for Energy and Mining
- Department for Infrastructure and Transport
- Department for Environment and Water (DEW)
- Multiple Landscape Boards
- Local Government Association of South Australia
- Housing and Urban Development agencies
- Country Fire Service (CFS)
- Federal agencies such as NIAA and infrastructure-related organisations
- Defence
- Health agencies
- Native title-related organisations
- Regional and local councils
- Office for Community and Aboriginal Affairs (OCA) and other Aboriginal engagement bodies
- PIRSA
- Department for Environment and Water
- Local Government Association
- CFS
- SA Water

- Federal government agencies
- Defence
- Native Vegetation Council
- Pastoral Board
- Health agencies
- Outback Communities Authority

Discussion acknowledged that additional government stakeholders may emerge as planning progresses and that both state and federal perspectives would be important for successful implementation.

Industry

A wide range of industry sectors were identified as having either direct responsibility or influence regarding buffel grass spread and management. Key sectors included:

- Pastoral sector (listed as high influence)
- Livestock industries
- Transport sector
- Agricultural producers
- Tourism operators
- Livestock SA
- SA Water
- Telecommunications providers
- Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy
- Tourism industry organisations
- Energy transmission projects such as ElectraNet
- Major infrastructure projects including pipeline developments
- Primary Producers SA
- Transport sector organisations
- Forestry industry

- Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC)
- Mining and energy sectors
- Rail operators (ARTC)
- Utilities and telecommunications providers
- Major infrastructure projects

A common theme was that industries operating in natural environments have a duty of care to help prevent spread and manage impacts where disturbance creates opportunities for buffel grass establishment.

NGOs & Community

Participants identified numerous non-government organisations and community groups with a genuine interest and role in buffel grass management, including:

- Australian Land Conservation Alliance (***listed as high priority***)
- Bush Heritage Australia
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)
- Nature Foundation
- Greening Australia
- Arid Lands Conservation Alliance (ALCA)
- Invasive Species Council
- Friends of Parks groups
- Four-wheel drive clubs
- Sporting and recreational associations
- Hunting organisations
- Various local volunteer and community-based environmental groups
- Local Landcare groups
- Friends of Parks groups
- Community volunteers
- Regional conservation groups
- Landcare groups
- Friends groups
- In some responses: "No one"
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)
- Conservation-focused organisations

A key discussion point was that while broad engagement is important, an effective steering committee cannot practically accommodate dozens of organisations directly. Participants acknowledged the need for representative structures to ensure broad consultation while maintaining a manageable governance model.

Traditional Owners

The Traditional Owner stakeholder discussion highlighted the importance of broad Aboriginal representation and recognised the significant role Aboriginal ranger groups already play in buffel grass management. Participants identified:

- Native Title groups
- Aboriginal corporations
- Traditional Owner representatives
- Indigenous ranger groups
- Desert Alliance organisations
- Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs)
- Native title bodies
- Indigenous Protected Area representatives
- National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
- Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC)
- Voice to Parliament representatives
- Regional Aboriginal governance organisations
- Desert Alliance organisations
- Indigenous land management organisations

Participants emphasised that Traditional Owners are critical partners due to their extensive on-ground experience, cultural knowledge and direct involvement in landscape management.

Research Organisations

Participants identified research institutions as a critical component of evidence-based decision-making. Suggested organisations included:

- Research institutions
- Research partnerships
- Flinders University
- University of Adelaide
- CSIRO
- Drought Hubs
- Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs)
- Research and Development Corporations (RDCs)
- Centre for Invasive Species Solutions
- Livestock Australia research programs
- Interstate research programs already undertaking buffel grass work

There was recognition that South Australia could learn from research and management approaches already being implemented elsewhere.

Landscape Boards and NRM organisations

Participants strongly supported involvement from Landscape Boards already affected by buffel grass, while also stressing the need to bring in regions where invasion risk is increasing.

Suggested participants included:

- Existing participating Landscape Boards
- Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board
- Regional Landscape Boards in southern areas
- Eyre Peninsula, Hills and Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island regions
- NRM Regions Australia as a national representative body

The group recognised that buffel grass has the potential to expand well beyond its current distribution and therefore planning should not be limited to currently affected areas.

Stakeholders frequently identified as missing

- Tourism sector
- Transport sector
- Additional pastoral industry representatives
- Local government
- Federal government agencies
- Additional Traditional Owner groups
- Community advocacy organisations
- Many community groups
- Grey nomads
- Cross-border organisations
- Research organisations not currently engaged
- Arid Lands Botanic Gardens
- Friends of Parks
- Regional tourism bodies
- LASA?

Steering Committee: Strong support

Expectations of steering committee

The dominant words that emerged included:

- Strategy development
- Advocacy
- Influence
- Coordination
- Leadership
- Longevity
- Action-oriented implementation
- Securing outcomes and government attention

When participants ranked priorities, three themes clearly emerged:

1. Developing strategies and plans
2. Advocacy and influence (including driving collaboration)
3. Securing funding.

These were viewed as the primary functions of a future steering committee, ahead of other activities. Participants saw strategic planning and strong advocacy as essential prerequisites for coordinated action and funding success.

Taskforce: Strong Support

There was overwhelming support for re-establishing a taskforce model *beneath the steering committee* to determine priorities coordinate operational delivery.

Participants felt a taskforce should:

- Coordinate operational activities.
- Provide technical expertise.
- Facilitate research and trials.
- Support development and implementation of the strategic plan.

Participants saw a clear distinction between:

- Steering committee responsibilities focusing on strategy, advocacy and funding; and
- Taskforce responsibilities focusing on operational delivery and coordination.

Proposed taskforce functions

Role

The strongest support was expressed for a taskforce role that would:

- Coordinate operational activities across organisations.
- Facilitate collaboration between stakeholders.
- Provide technical expertise and advice.
- Lead the development of and support implementation of strategic plans.
- Help deliver statewide consistency in management approaches.
- Guide and coordinate practical on-ground action.

Research and trial coordination was also supported, although views were slightly more varied on this aspect than on the operational coordination role.

Suggested taskforce membership

Participants consistently nominated people and organisations working directly on buffel grass management, including:

- Landscape Boards.
- Biosecurity SA (PIRSA) – State Coordinator.
- Traditional Owner representatives.
- Research experts.
- Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).
- Experienced practitioners and technical specialists.
- On-ground land managers and operational stakeholders.

The discussion reinforced the view that taskforce membership should prioritise practical expertise and operational experience.

State Buffel Grass Coordinator: Strong Support

Expectations: Participants identified funding as the clear priority for a future coordinator. Other high-priority functions included:

- Updating the strategic plan.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Research coordination.
- Establishing governance arrangements.
- Raising the profile of buffel grass within government.
- Securing political support.

The clear consensus was that without long-term funding, other strategic objectives would be difficult to achieve.

Short-term priorities (9-12 months)

The strongest themes identified by participants were:

1. Securing funding.
2. Strategic planning and review.
3. Research coordination.
4. Stakeholder engagement.
5. Establishing governance structures.
6. Raising buffel grass as a government priority.
7. Advocacy and influence activities.

Funding emerged as the dominant priority by a considerable margin, with participants repeatedly emphasising that meaningful progress would be difficult without dedicated and ongoing resources.

Long-term priorities (three years)

When asked to think beyond the first year, participants again returned to funding and advocacy as the most critical outcomes. There was strong recognition that a sustainable funding model would enable:

- Implementation of strategic plans.
- On-ground management programs.
- Research and monitoring.
- Stakeholder coordination.
- Long-term governance arrangements.

The review and implementation of the Buffel Grass Strategic Plan was also consistently identified as a major priority that should commence within the coordinator's first year.

Future (2035): Keep Change Add

Two contrasting futures for buffel grass management in South Australia: a "**Success 2035**" scenario and "**Business as Usual 2035**" scenario.

Success by 2035 depends less on discovering new control techniques and more on building the governance, coordination, resourcing and partnerships needed to apply what is already known at scale.

Participants envisaged a successful future characterised by statewide coordination, long-term funding, shared responsibility, strong stakeholder partnerships, effective hygiene practices, robust data and sustained political support. Conversely, the greatest risks were fragmented management, unclear accountability, short-term funding and a continued lack of coordinated action.

The workshop participants are not calling for a complete redesign of the strategy. Rather, they are seeking a modernised version of the existing framework that retains the core zonal approach while strengthening governance, accountability, evidence, climate preparedness, technology adoption and implementation capacity. This appears to be the clearest consensus across all three boards.

Keep the existing strategic framework, but modernise it through updated priorities, stronger accountability, improved evidence and mapping, climate change readiness, and clearer implementation arrangements.

Summary table

✓ KEEP	🔄 CHANGE	+ ADD
Retain the strong foundations of the current strategy, particularly the vision, management zone framework, goals, technical information and successful case studies.	Update management zones, priorities and mapping; improve accountability and monitoring; and make the strategy more strategic, measurable and user-friendly.	Build a more future-focused strategy by incorporating climate change, governance, research and technology, First Nations knowledge, biosecurity preparedness and economic analysis.
Vision and strategic	Update management zones Review zone boundaries, priorities and mapping to reflect current conditions and challenges.	Climate change and fire Include climate change, drought, fire interactions and future risk modelling as major strategic considerations.
Management zone framework	Modernise priorities Refresh priorities to reflect current infestations, emerging threats and management opportunities.	Governance and accountability Clearly define stakeholder roles, responsibilities, decision-making processes and implementation arrangements.
Goals and actions retain	Stronger accountability Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, reporting and accountability for delivery of actions.	Research and innovation Incorporate research priorities, citizen science, AI mapping, remote sensing and emerging technologies.
Case studies and success stories	More strategic goals Refine goals to focus on measurable outcomes rather than operational activities.	Biosecurity preparedness Add hygiene infrastructure, clean-down facilities, rapid response capability and pathway management.
Technical background and mapping	Improve accessibility Make the strategy easier to navigate, find online and use.	First Nations knowledge Strengthen First Nations involvement and incorporate biocultural and cultural fire management perspectives.
Extension and capacity building	Refresh vision and messaging Raise the profile of the vision and strengthen the strategic narrative.	Economic analysis and resourcing Include cost-benefit analysis, funding triggers and resourcing requirements.

More detail

The "Change" board shows much stronger convergence than divergence. While there are many individual suggestions, they cluster around a small number of recurring themes. The dominant message is: **Update the strategy to reflect today's realities, clarify priorities and responsibilities, and make the plan more strategic, measurable and actionable.**

Priority 1: Review Management Zones, Priorities and Mapping - Most frequently raised theme.

Many felt the current zones remain valuable but may no longer accurately reflect the current spread, risks and management priorities.

- Update management zones.
- Review zone boundaries.
- Update zone rationale.
- Revise maps.
- Ensure priorities reflect the current situation.
- Consider splitting or modifying zones.
- Clarify how zones drive outcomes.
- Improve mapping and distribution information.

Recommended direction: Retain the zoned approach but modernise it.

 Review and update:

- Management zones.
- Zone boundaries.
- Priority areas.
- Mapping products.
- Zone rationale.

Priority 2: Make Goals More Strategic and SMART

Participants appear to feel the current plan sometimes describes what people do rather than what success looks like.

- Update goals.
- Make goals SMART.
- Review goals to be less operational.
- Shift from activities to outcomes.
- Reorder goals.
- Strengthen focus on prevention and pathways.

Recommended direction: Move from activity-based goals to outcome-based goals.

 Revise goals so they are:

- Specific.
- Measurable.
- Achievable.

- Relevant.
- Time-bound.

Priority 3: Strengthen Accountability, Implementation and MERI

Participants want greater confidence that actions will be delivered and progress measured.

- Clear responsibility for actions.
- Better accountability.
- Stronger implementation framework.
- Better MERI.
- Track success and failure.
- Link actions to outcomes.

Recommended direction: Clarify who is responsible and how success will be measured.

 Strengthen:

- Governance.
- Reporting.
- Performance indicators.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Accountability for delivery.

Priority 4: Update the Strategy to Reflect Current Conditions

The landscape has changed since the original strategy was written.

- Priorities are no longer valid.
- Update to current status.
- Reflect contemporary challenges.
- Update legislation references.
- Include new knowledge and evidence.

Recommended direction: Refresh the strategy to reflect where buffel grass management is today, not where it was when the plan was first developed.

 Complete a strategy-wide review of:

- Priorities.
- Legislative references.
- Current spread and impacts.
- Emerging risks.

Priority 5: Improve Evidence, Research and Technical Information

Decision makers want stronger evidence supporting strategic choices.

- Add research and trials.
- Improve technical information.
- Update evidence base.
- Improve data collection.
- Know population trends.
- Include latest science.

Recommended direction: Build the strategy on the strongest available science and evidence.

 Expand:

- Research findings.
- Trials and demonstrations.
- Technical background information.
- Monitoring data.
- Trend information.

Priority 6: Refresh the Vision and Strategic Narrative

Participants generally support the vision but feel it could be stronger and more prominent.

- Move vision to the front.
- Renew vision.
- Broaden stakeholder ownership.
- Increase urgency.
- Make strategy more future-focused.

Recommended direction: Keep the intent but strengthen the story.

 Review and refresh:

- Vision statement.
- Strategic narrative.
- Long-term outcomes.
- Future direction.

Priority 7: Improve Accessibility and Communication

The strategy should work for a broad audience, not only technical practitioners.

- Easier to find online.
- Easier to navigate.
- More user-friendly.
- Better community communication.
- Clearer explanation of priorities.

Recommended direction: Make the strategy easier to find, understand and use.

 Improve:

- Website access.
- Document usability.
- Communication products.
- Navigation and layout.

Priority 8: Governance, Legislation and Policy Alignment

- Legislative updates.
- Align related documents.
- Improve consistency.
- Update references to current legislation.

Recommended direction: Create a strategy that sits clearly within the current policy environment.

 Ensure alignment across:

- Legislation.
- Policy.
- Related plans.
- Regional strategies.

Overall prioritisation

Tier 1: Critical changes	Tier 2: Important improvements	Tier 3: Supporting improvements
1. Review management zones, priorities and mapping. 2. Update goals to be more strategic and SMART. 3. Strengthen accountability, implementation and MERI. 4. Refresh priorities based on current conditions.	1. Strengthen research, evidence and technical information. 2. Refresh the vision and strategic narrative. 3. Improve accessibility and usability.	1. Update governance, legislation and policy alignment. 2. Cultural considerations and stakeholder engagement. 3. Review supporting materials such as case studies and technical appendices.

Lower-Priority Themes

These were raised, but by fewer participants:

- Cultural considerations.
- Whether case studies are still required.
- Community engagement approaches.
- Repositioning or reordering sections.
- Technical information becoming a separate supporting document.

Overarching themes

1. Coordination is the critical success factor

The strongest and most consistent theme across all groups was the need for a coordinated, statewide approach.

Success was consistently linked to coordinated effort, while failure was associated with fragmented and uncoordinated action.

- A dedicated state coordinator.
- Shared decision-making.
- Common priorities.
- Better alignment across land tenures.
- Stronger collaboration between agencies, industry and communities.
- Consistent management approaches across regions.

2. Long-term funding drives outcomes

Effective buffel management cannot be achieved through short-term project funding. Long-term investment underpins both prevention and control efforts.

Success scenario	Business-as-usual scenario
• Secure, ongoing investment • Long-term funding commitments • Dedicated staff and resources • Sustainable program delivery • Investment linked to strategic priorities	• Fragmented funding • Grant dependency • Inconsistent investment • Insufficient resources • Loss of momentum between funding cycles

3. Shared responsibility across tenures

There was strong recognition that buffel grass cannot be managed by any single organisation.

Major barriers identified

Participants identified several recurring barriers that could lead to a "Business as Usual" future.

Governance and leadership

- Lack of statewide coordination.
- Unclear accountability.
- Frequent staff turnover.
- Changes in political priorities.
- Lack of bipartisan support.
- Poor governance structures.

Funding and resources

- Short-term project funding.
- Insufficient resources.
- Under-resourced strategies.

Success scenario	Business-as-usual scenario
• Shared ownership of the problem • Multi-tenure management • Collaboration between public and private landholders • Cross-jurisdictional cooperation • Clearly defined responsibilities	Several groups questioned: "Who is the ultimate owner of this issue?", reflecting concern that accountability is currently unclear and contributes to fragmented action.

4. Awareness & understanding remain major challenges

Many groups felt insufficient awareness continues to hinder action.

Success scenario	Business-as-usual scenario
• Stronger communication, education and advocacy is needed to maintain support across government, industry and the wider community.	• Key concerns included: • Limited understanding of impacts • Competing priorities • Lack of political awareness • Inconsistent community support • Poor visibility of management successes

5. Better information and evidence are needed

Participants wanted management decisions to be supported by better data and stronger evidence of what works. Success scenarios frequently referenced:

- Statewide mapping
- Monitoring systems
- Shared databases
- Research partnerships
- Evaluation of mgt effectiveness
- Return-on-investment evidence

- Lack of dedicated positions.
- Inability to sustain long-term action.

Planning and strategy

- Piecemeal management.
- Poor alignment between regions and agencies.
- Lack of clear priorities.
- Weak implementation of plans.
- Limited strategic direction.

Awareness and engagement

- Low public awareness.

- Low political awareness.
- Limited recognition of impacts.
- Weak advocacy.
- Stakeholder disengagement.
- Spread along transport corridors.
- Poor coordination across tenures.
- Difficulty maintaining long-term control.
- Lack of agreed management standards.

Operational challenges

- Inconsistent hygiene practices

Key success factors

Participants consistently linked positive outcomes in 2035 to the following factors:

Governance

- Dedicated state coordinator.
- Strong governance framework.
- Shared responsibility.
- Statewide strategic leadership.

Funding

- Ongoing investment.
- Long-term funding certainty.
- Resources matched to priority areas.

Coordination

- Cross-tenure collaboration.
- Multi-agency partnerships.
- Regional and local coordination.

- Shared management priorities.

Knowledge

- Research investment.
- Monitoring and evaluation.
- Mapping and data sharing.
- Better understanding of impacts.

Community support

- Strong engagement programs.
- Landholder participation.
- Increased awareness.
- Demonstrated success stories.

Priority actions emerging from the workshop

Governance and coordination

Highest priority

- Establish a dedicated statewide buffel grass coordinator.
- Develop a coordinated statewide management framework.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities across organisations.
- Create governance structures that survive political and staff changes.

Funding and resourcing

High priority

- Secure long-term funding commitments.
- Build dedicated implementation teams.
- Invest in regional delivery capacity.
- Reduce reliance on short-term grants.

Mapping, monitoring and data

High priority

- Develop shared statewide mapping.
- Establish a centralised data platform.
- Monitor spread and treatment outcomes.
- Build stronger evidence for investment decisions.

Prevention and hygiene

High Priority

- Improve washdown infrastructure.
- Strengthen vehicle hygiene practices.
- Prevent spread along transport corridors.
- Standardise hygiene protocols.

Research and innovation

Medium-high

- Support biological control research.
- Investigate improved control methods.
- Develop new herbicide options.
- Improve understanding of management effectiveness.

Extension and capacity building

Medium-high

- Increase education and awareness.
- Support landholder training.
- Share success stories.
- Develop extension programs across sectors.

Planning and implementation

Medium priority

- Develop regional management plans.
- Align actions across landscapes.
- Improve priority-setting processes.
- Focus on implementation rather than strategy development alone.

More detail: Grouped & Ranked

Success 2035: What happened to get here?

If ranked from most important to least important, the workshop participants overwhelmingly pointed to:

1. Statewide governance, leadership and coordination.
2. Long-term funding and dedicated resourcing.
3. Shared responsibility and stakeholder alignment.
4. Research, monitoring and mapping.
5. Prevention and hygiene.
6. Community engagement and capacity building.
7. Industry adoption and market influence.
8. Biodiversity protection outcomes.

These themes appeared consistently across almost all groups and form the strongest foundation for a Buffel Grass Success 2035 pathway.

1. Leadership, governance and coordination (highest priority)

- State-wide coordination of government and non-government stakeholders
- Agreed state-wide, regional and local coordination arrangements
- Ongoing tenure and state coordination
- Shared responsibility across stakeholders
- Dedicated state coordinator supported by specialist staff
- State coordinator supported by roles focused on:
 - Mapping
 - Coordination
 - Skills development
- Triple-interface model enabling the right people to step in at the right time
- All stakeholders working towards a common effort
- Strong information sharing across the buffel network
- Strategic Plan updated and implemented
- Good governance and clear accountability
- Government foresight and long-term commitment
- Bipartisan and multi-party political support
- Recognition of buffel as issue of national significance
- WONS listing making buffel everyone's responsibility
- WONS listing plus KTP listing
- WONS listing combined with national funding and coordination support

2. Sustainable funding and resourcing

- Consistent ongoing funding
- Minimum seven-year funding cycles
- Long-term program delivery
- Clearly defined funding sources
- Effective funded strategy
- Successful business case securing investment
- Funding viewed as an ongoing requirement rather than project-based
- Multi-tenure funding models supporting collaboration
- Specialist and dedicated workforce established
- Employment and workforce development supporting implementation
- Funding directed to priority outcomes rather than low-value activities

3. Evidence, knowledge and decision support

- Centralised statewide mapping database informing action
- Monitoring and evaluation embedded in programs
- Return-on-investment data demonstrating benefits
- Consistent information sharing across sectors
- Improved knowledge exchange and learning
- Better decision-making supported by evidence and data

4. Collective ownership and stakeholder buy-in

- Buy-in achieved across stakeholder groups
- Common vision established
- Industry and community ownership of the challenge
- Landholders, governments and conservation interests aligned
- Strong multi-tenure collaboration

- Shared commitment to long-term outcomes

5. Best practice prevention and management

- Statewide hygiene standards adopted
- Consistent weed hygiene practices
- Adoption of agreed best-practice management approaches
- Consistency in control methods and operational delivery

Success 2035: What were the priority actions?

1. Establish statewide governance and coordination (highest priority)

- Well coordinated action across jurisdictions and tenures
- Develop and maintain strong governance arrangements
- Establish and maintain a dedicated buffel coordinator function
- Coordinated engagement across all stakeholders
- Shared vision and common goals
- Build common interests across sectors
- Ongoing local, regional and statewide coordination
- Regional management plans aligned to statewide priorities

2. Secure long-term funding and investment

- Successful funding models established
- Dedicated resilience funding
- Long-term investment commitments
- Funding linked to clearly defined priorities and outcomes

3. Prevention, hygiene and risk reduction

- Establish washdown facilities
- Improve vehicle hygiene
- Adopt consistent weed hygiene standards
- Identify and manage high fire-risk areas with significant buffel presence
- Conduct risk assessments across all sectors and industries

4. Research, innovation and knowledge development

- Priority research projects

- Scientific research and biological control investigation
- Research into targeted management approaches
- Development of world-leading control methods
- Investigation of new herbicides
- Improved land management tools
- Better coordination of R&D across organisational boundaries
- Consistent decision-making tools and knowledge systems

5. Community capacity building and engagement

- Education and awareness programs
- Capacity building for landholders and farmers
- Extension programs and support services
- Local action groups and champions
- Involving communities in implementation
- Tapping into local knowledge and resources
- Communicating successes and demonstrating benefits

6. Industry integration and market drivers

- Industry adoption of buffel management as standard practice
- Market influence and supply chain drivers encouraging action
- Integration of buffel management into normal business practices
- Cross-sector participation in management and prevention efforts

7. Biodiversity and landscape outcomes

- Reinvestment into threatened species protection
- Landscape-scale management outcomes
- Protection of high-value environmental assets and priority sites

Success 2035: What key failures were avoided?

Leadership and governance failures

- No state coordinator
- No bipartisan support
- No political leadership
- Lack of accountability
- Poor governance arrangements
- Fragmented management approaches

Funding failures

- Limited funding
- Short-term investment
- Inability to sustain effort over time

Awareness failures

- Lack of community awareness
- No publicised solutions
- Low understanding of impacts and management pathways

Operational failures

- No coordinated fire management
- Resistance to herbicide treatment
- Inconsistent management practices
- Continued spread along transport corridors

Business as Usual 2035

If we keep doing as we have been doing, groups consistently described a 2035 future where buffel grass continues to spread because leadership is fragmented, funding remains short-term, accountability is unclear, and management occurs in isolated pockets rather than through coordinated statewide action. Awareness and advocacy continue, but they fail to translate into sufficient on-ground outcomes. The result is an under-resourced, reactive system that struggles to achieve lasting landscape-scale impact.

What happened to get here?

1. Lack of leadership, governance and coordination (highest priority)

These issues appeared most consistently across all groups and were seen as the primary drivers of a poor future outcome.

- No state-wide coordination
- Piecemeal coordination and fragmented management approaches
- Patch-focused rather than landscape-scale management
- Lack of accountability and ownership
- Lack of advocacy and coordination
- Lack of commitment at leadership and Board levels
- No political will or sustained political support
- Coordinated action across tenures lacking
- Poor continuity of champions due to staff turnover
- Lack of tenure ownership and responsibility
- Existing tenure management issues remain unresolved

Key underlying question raised by participants:

"Who is the ultimate owner of this issue?"

2. Insufficient funding and resourcing

- No defined growth in investment over time
- Lack of resourcing for implementation
- Failure to secure funding because the issue spans many landholders and tenures
- Government did not fully understand the issue and therefore underfunded it
- Continuous reliance on short-term grants rather than strategic investment
- Under-resourced strategies and programs

3. Low awareness and understanding

- Lack of awareness within the community and decision-makers
- Lack of awareness of the scale of the threat
- Lack of understanding of the importance and urgency of buffel management
- Climate-related risks not fully recognised or understood
- Summer rainfall and climate change impacts not adequately incorporated into management planning

4. Inadequate strategic direction

- Buffel not listed as a Weed of National Significance (WONS)
- Lack of defined management goals for different zones and invasion stages
- Priorities diverted by competing issues
- Duty of care obligations not fully embedded in management approaches
- Strategies developed but not effectively implemented

5. Limited on-ground outcomes

- Poor tenure-focused management outcomes
- Landholders invest effort but fail to achieve lasting outcomes
- Legislation unable to keep pace with the spread of buffel grass
- Ad hoc and reactive management becomes the norm

What things were missing or poorly executed)

1. Strategic coordination and governance (highest priority)

The strongest recurring weakness was the absence of coordinated action.

- Priorities unclear across organisations and regions
- Priorities not aligned across tenures
- Localised actions that were not strategic or coordinated
- Lack of coordination and follow-up on agreed actions
- No state coordinator driving implementation
- Lack of clear separation between policy development and operational delivery
- Frequent ministerial changes reduced consistency and momentum
- Political division weakened collective action

2. Insufficient investment and capacity

- Limited funding available for implementation
- Ongoing dependence on grant funding cycles
- Work undertaken at a scale that exceeded available community resources

- Strategies existed but remained under-resourced and unimplemented

3. Focus on process rather than action

- Effort focused on advocacy and awareness rather than on-ground implementation
- Advocacy failed to translate into practical management outcomes
- Too much administrative burden at senior levels
- Excessive planning without sufficient delivery
- Discussion of annual reviews rather than action-oriented delivery

4. Lack of shared understanding

- Poor understanding of which actions were most important
- Unclear management priorities across sectors and tenures
- Inconsistent interpretation of responsibilities and objectives

