



## **CLC wants NT government to declare buffel grass a weed**

The Central Land Council wants the Northern Territory government to take the overdue step of declaring the main fuel of the bushfires burning all around Alice Springs a weed.

As large surrounding fires blanket the town in smoke for the second week in a row the council has called for a weed declaration to assist with the management of the invasive and highly flammable buffel grass that is fanning the flames.

A resolution outlining the council's appeal has been sent to the NT environment minister and a working group advising her on the management of the grass.

"The resolution shows how strongly our elected members feel about the extremely destructive cultural, health and environmental impacts of this introduced species," CLC general manager Josie Douglas said.

"On some days last week the air quality in Alice Springs was on par with some of the most polluted cities in the world."

With an area five times the size of Tasmania already destroyed and more than 80 per cent of the Territory predicted to burn this season, residents of remote towns and communities have months of smoke and fires ahead of them.

"Buffel is not just a danger to our health, homes and critical infrastructure, but threatens our sacred sites and is one of the main drivers of native species extinctions in Central Australia.

"Because it burns much hotter than native grasses it pushes our native plants and the animals that depend on them to the brink," said Dr Douglas.

The CLC wants the NT government to follow the lead of South Australia, where the grass is already being managed as a weed.

"A weed declaration would be a catalyst for action and help to attract resources for buffel grass control," said Dr Douglas.

"We stand ready to develop a weed management plan with government agencies and the traditional owners we represent and to better protect country that is still intact."

Dr Douglas said investment in research and development, such as biological controls of the weed, is a matter of urgency.

The CLC is a member of the NT government's buffel grass technical working group and part of a broad chorus of voices urging that the weed declaration apply to all land tenures across the Territory.

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