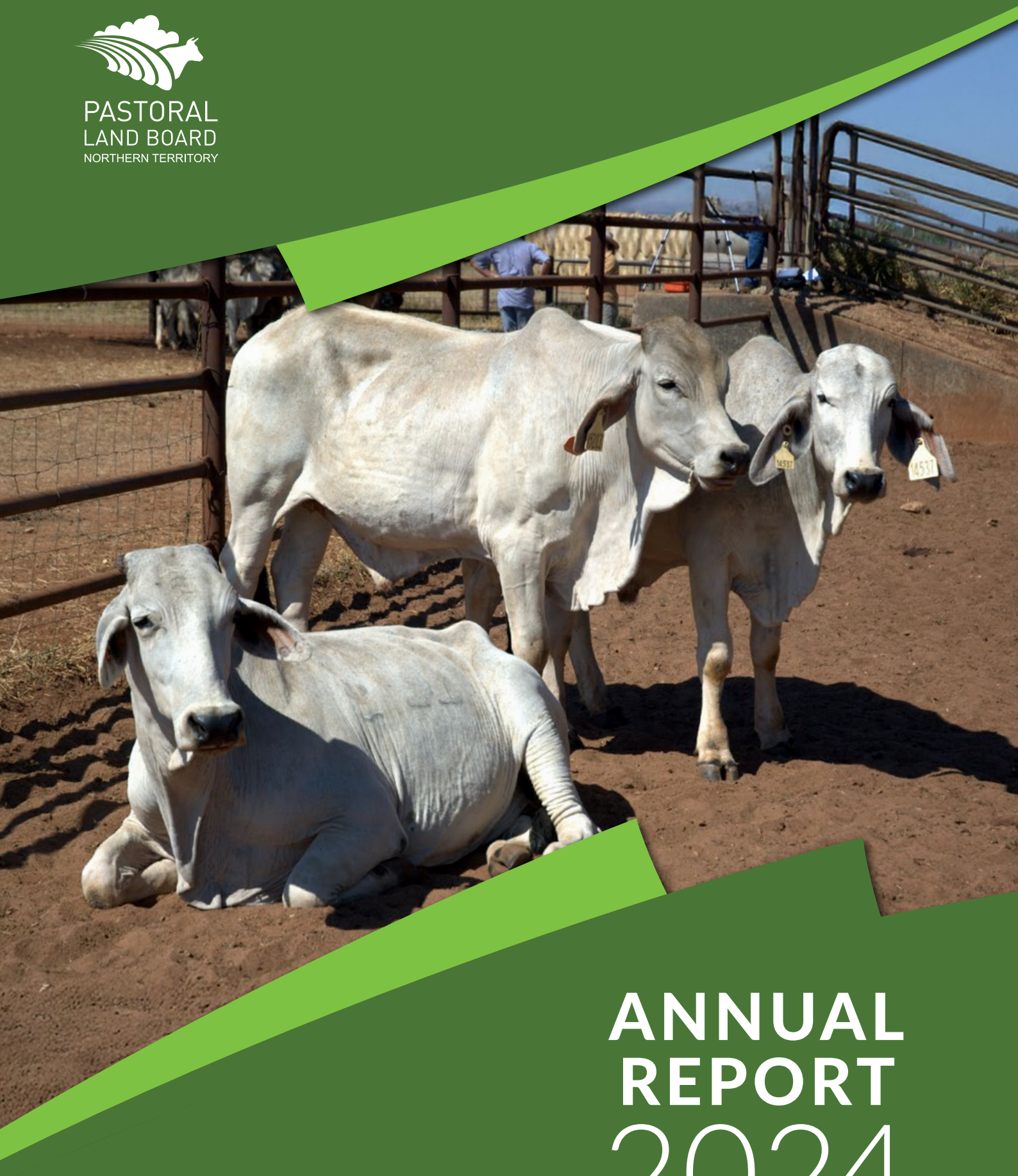
PASTORAL
LAND BOARD
NORTHERN TERRITORY



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Hon Gerard Maley
Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
Parliament House
GPO Box 3146
DARWIN NT 0801

Dear Minister

In accordance with section 29(a) of the *Pastoral Land Act 1992*, I hereby submit for your information, the Pastoral Land Board Annual Report on the land condition of the NT Pastoral Estate for the period 1 January to 31 December 2024.

The Pastoral Land Board acknowledges the Northern Territory Government's commitment to rebuilding the Territory's economy and enhancing regional industries, with a focus on agriculture, biosecurity, and sustainable land management. In alignment with these priorities, the Board has undertaken comprehensive land condition assessments, implemented recovery plans for affected pastoral leases, and engaged with stakeholders to ensure the resilience and productivity of the pastoral estate. These efforts support the government's objectives of fostering economic growth, enhancing agricultural productivity, and promoting sustainable land use practices across the Northern Territory.

Yours sincerely

Paul Burke
Chairperson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board is a statutory authority under the *Pastoral Land Act 1992* appointed by the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries (the Minister). The Board reports annually to the Minister on the NT Pastoral Estate, which is held over 225 pastoral leases in eleven Pastoral Districts.

This Annual Report generally covers the Board's activities in the 12 months from 1 January to 31 December 2024. To prepare this report, on-ground field data, remote sensing satellite monitoring and first-hand accounts from land managers are compiled to assess land condition at the property, district, and regional scales.

Rainfall from 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024 was generally above average across most of the Northern Territory. Large parts of the Territory, including the VRD, Sturt Plateau, Gulf and Darwin Pastoral Districts, received very much above average rainfall, supporting widespread pasture growth. The Barkly, Northern Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Plenty districts also recorded above to very much above average rainfall, although some isolated pockets within the Katherine and Roper districts experienced below average rainfall.

The 2024 fire season was widespread but varied across districts. The Darwin, Katherine and Roper Pastoral Districts experienced extensive fires, with up to 43% of the Darwin District and 40% of the Roper District burnt. The VRD and Barkly districts also recorded large fire extents, though less than in 2023. In contrast, fire activity was minimal in the Plenty and Southern Alice Springs Districts. Fire effects influenced pasture distribution and contributed to variable vegetation cover across districts.

Pasture growth in 2024 generally reflected the high rainfall, with most districts showing above average to very much above average vegetation cover. Strong perennial grass recovery was noted, especially in districts with consecutive good wet seasons such as the VRD and Barkly. However, in areas heavily burnt or under grazing pressure, cover was lower and often dominated by annual species. Across monitored sites, the prevalence of 3P (perennial, productive, palatable) grasses indicated generally good pasture condition, supporting stable or improving land condition trends on many leases.

On-ground monitoring was undertaken at 357 sites across 33 pastoral leases in nine Pastoral Districts. Of these sites, 33 were assessed in A condition, 151 in B, 137 in C, and 36 in D condition. Overall, two pastoral leases were rated in D condition, while the remaining leases were rated either C (16 leases) or B (15 leases).

This Annual Report includes a trend analysis of changes in land condition since previous inspections. The land condition of 30 pastoral leases either improved or remained stable.

Three leases showed a decline in condition: two leases declined from B to C condition (one in the Roper District and one in the Southern Alice Springs District), and one lease in the Darwin District declined from C to D condition.

Of the 33 leases inspected, two were formally recommended to the Pastoral Land Board as being in D condition. The Board is actively working with the managers of these leases to support recovery and address the identified land condition issues.

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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2024 Annual Report of the Pastoral Land Board.

This year has been marked by strong engagement, robust decision-making, and significant travel throughout our vast pastoral estate. The Board held several meetings throughout 2024, reflecting our commitment to ongoing oversight and responsive governance. I am especially proud of the success of our Pastoral Land Board Communique, which has provided transparent and timely updates to pastoral lessees and the wider community after each meeting. This has been a clear step forward in our efforts to increase openness and build trust.

In 2024, the Northern Territory pastoral sector experienced one of the wettest years on record, with most districts recording much above average to very much above average rainfall. This rainfall supported strong pasture growth and improved vegetation cover across much of the estate, offering optimism after previous years marked by drought and fire. However, the sector also continued to face challenges, including extensive fire activity in some districts and the ongoing management of weeds, feral animals, and land condition recovery.

The Board made several important decisions this year, including assessments of land condition across 33 pastoral leases and formal recommendations for recovery plans on properties in poorer condition. We also reviewed and updated the Pastoral Land Clearing Guidelines, reflecting contemporary best practices and providing greater clarity for proponents. The introduction of revised Terms of Reference has further strengthened our governance framework.

In 2024, there was also a significant political change with the appointment of the Hon. Gerard Maley as the new Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries following the change in government. We look forward to working closely with the Minister to support a vibrant and sustainable pastoral industry in the Northern Territory.

The Board was privileged to travel and engage directly with pastoralists in the VRD, Katherine, Sturt Plateau and Southern Alice Springs pastoral districts. We extend our sincere thanks to all those who generously hosted us and shared their knowledge and experiences on the ground. These visits are critical in informing our balanced and evidence-based decision-making and ensuring that the perspectives of landholders continue to shape our approach.

The Northern Territory beef industry is estimated to be worth around $1.2 billion annually, employing roughly 10,000 people and exporting nearly 400,000 live animals each year into South-East Asian markets. According to the Northern Territory Government, the broader agriculture, forestry and fishing sector contributed approximately $1.4 billion (around 3.4 per cent of Gross State Product) in 2023–24, demonstrating the importance of the pastoral industry to regional economies and communities. With strong rainfall and improved land condition this year, the industry is well-positioned to build on this strength and continue driving sustainable economic growth across the Territory.

Throughout 2024, the pastoral industry has also advanced important national conversations on climate resilience, carbon farming, and the adoption of innovative remote monitoring technologies. These themes resonate strongly with our Board's priorities and our shared vision for the Territory. The Board remains firmly committed to promoting sustainable grazing management, protecting land condition, and supporting regional economic development. We will continue to foster genuine partnerships with pastoralists, Traditional Owners, government agencies, and industry stakeholders to ensure that decisions are transparent, practical, and forward-looking.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their expertise, dedication, and collegiality. I also extend my gratitude to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for their professional support and to all pastoral lessees for their ongoing cooperation and stewardship of the land.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to supporting strong and sustainable growth across the Northern Territory's pastoral estate, ensuring it continues to thrive as a vital part of our economy and landscapes.

Paul Burke
Chairman – Pastoral Land Board

MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRPERSON

MR PAUL BURKE
Commenced with the Board
on 28 August 2023

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

MR ALLAN ANDREWS
Commenced with the Board
on 28 August 2023

MEMBERS

MR ROY CHISHOLM
Commenced with the Board
on 28 August 2019

DR SUE FITZPATRICK
Commenced with the Board
on 28 August 2023

MR DANNY HAYES
Commenced with the Board
on 28 August 2023

DR LEIGH HUNT
Commenced with the Board
on 28 September 2015

MS GEMMA LAKE
Commenced with the Board
on 28 August 2023

MR ALASTAIR SHIELDS
Commenced with the Board
on 19 June 2019

DR MICHAEL WELLINGTON
Commenced with the Board
on 28 August 2023

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- Ms Bianca Overington
- Ms Noelene McCreadie

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

Section 29 of the *Pastoral Land Act 1992* outlines the function of the Board:

a. to report regularly to, and as directed by, the Minister, but in any case not less than once a year, on the general condition of pastoral land and the operations of the Board

b. to consider applications for the subdivision or consolidation of pastoral land and make recommendations to the Minister in relation to them

c. to plan, establish, operate and maintain systems for monitoring the condition and use of pastoral land on a District or other basis

d. to assess the suitability of proposed new pastoral leases over vacant Crown land

e. to direct the preparation, and monitor the implementation, of remedial plans

f. to monitor, supervise or cause to be carried out work in relation to the rectification of degradation or other damage to pastoral land

g. to monitor the numbers and effect of stock and feral and other animals on pastoral land

h. to monitor and administer the conditions to which pastoral leases are subject

i. to consider and determine applications for permission to use pastoral land for a non-pastoral purpose in accordance with Part 7

j. to make recommendations to the Minister on any matter relating to the administration of this Act

k. to hear and determine all questions, and consider and make recommendations on all matters, referred to it by the Minister

l. such other functions as are imposed on it by or under this or any other Act or as directed by the Minister.

Other functions outlined in the Act include:

- to determine applications for clearing pastoral land
- to determine applications for non-pastoral use of pastoral land
- to consider breaches of conditions referred by the Minister
- to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on applications for conversion of term pastoral leases to perpetual tenure
- to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on applications for consent to transfer a pastoral lease or sub-lease should the advice of the Board be sought
- to administer the access provisions of the Act, including nomination of access routes under Part 6.

LAND CONDITION

Land condition is an assessment of vegetation and soil health as indicated by ground cover, species composition, tree and shrub density, presence of weeds or increaser species, soil surface condition and soil erosion. These attributes are assessed relative to land in near-pristine condition.

The main influences on land condition are rainfall, grazing by domestic, native and feral grazers and fire. Grazing is managed by manipulating stocking rates, stock water distribution, feral grazing control and fire. Fire on its own can change land condition by being too frequent or too infrequent over a long period, but its main effect on land condition is through changing the distribution of grazing as grazers prefer younger grass.

RECOVERY PLANS TO ADDRESS LAND CONDITION ISSUES

In cases where land condition issues are identified on a pastoral lease, the Board may request the lessee to prepare and submit a voluntary recovery or remedial plan detailing actions to be taken to address the land management issues. It is the expectation that pastoral lessees acknowledge their duty to adopt sound management practices and their responsibility to address any land condition issues that may arise. In line with this philosophy, the Board seeks voluntary collaboration with pastoral lessees to address land condition issues.

While voluntary recovery plans are preferred in the first instance, if the Board believes that where pastoral land has been degraded or otherwise damaged it may require a remedial management plan detailing the proposed management of the pastoral land over a specified period. Remedial plans need to be endorsed by the Board and are registered on the title.

There are currently no statutory remedial plans in place.

PASTORAL LAND MONITORING PROGRAM

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries assesses and monitors land condition for the Pastoral Land Board.

INTEGRATED MONITORING PROGRAM

The integrated monitoring program was introduced in 2013 to provide objective, whole-of-landscape reporting of changes in land cover. It comprises a network of ground-based sites, incorporating the existing Tier 1 sites, where suitable, with newly established sites appropriate to validate and inform satellite data and products.

New sites are established at or near existing Tier 1 sites to maintain consistency in the photographic and data records. In some cases, it is not appropriate to locate a site nearby due to factors such as proximity to infrastructure, land system boundaries and changes in vegetation structure and type. Where Tier 1 sites are not appropriate for inclusion in the integrated monitoring program, sites continue to be photographed to expand the Tier 1 photo archive.

The integrated monitoring program relies on the Rangeland Monitoring Officers working with the knowledge and experience of land managers and lessees. Both the ground data collected and information products produced from satellite data require on-ground local knowledge and understanding to explain changes and gain a further understanding of landscape dynamics. Measured field data are used to better calibrate Landsat-derived products to the NT conditions and then validate their accuracy for specific locations. The two sources of information (ground-based and remote sensing) are then interpreted in the context of knowledge and experience of practical land managers to enable reporting of land condition at property, landscape and regional scales.

As the number of revisits increase at a site, the expanding monitoring record will allow changes in the vegetation and soils, and their probable causes, to be documented, in a similar way to that which is now possible for vegetation cover using remote sensing.

REMOTE SENSING OF THE DYNAMICS OF VEGETATION COVER

The remote sensing or satellite-based data component of the integrated monitoring program was developed through a collaborative research program between the Northern Territory and Queensland Governments. Data from the program is used to contribute to an internationally recognised method for systematically monitoring change in vegetation cover and its converse, bare ground, at a range of spatial and temporal scales. The 30-m pixel size of Landsat imagery allows change in vegetation cover to be analysed at the site level (1ha) through to Pastoral Districts (~10 000km2 to >130 000km2) and the entire NT (~1 346 500km2). Reporting intervals can be as short as two weeks over 36 years (1988 to current).

FRACTIONAL COVER

Analysis of the dynamics of vegetation cover within this Annual Report is based on fractional cover. This is an estimate of the three components of land cover that can be distinguished from the spectral data and collected by the Thematic Mapper instrument carried on the Landsat satellite (i.e. Landsat TM). The three components are bare ground (comprising soil, rocks and gravels), actively growing (photosynthetic) vegetation and senescent (non-photosynthetic) vegetation (including litter and hayed-off grass) (Figure 1).

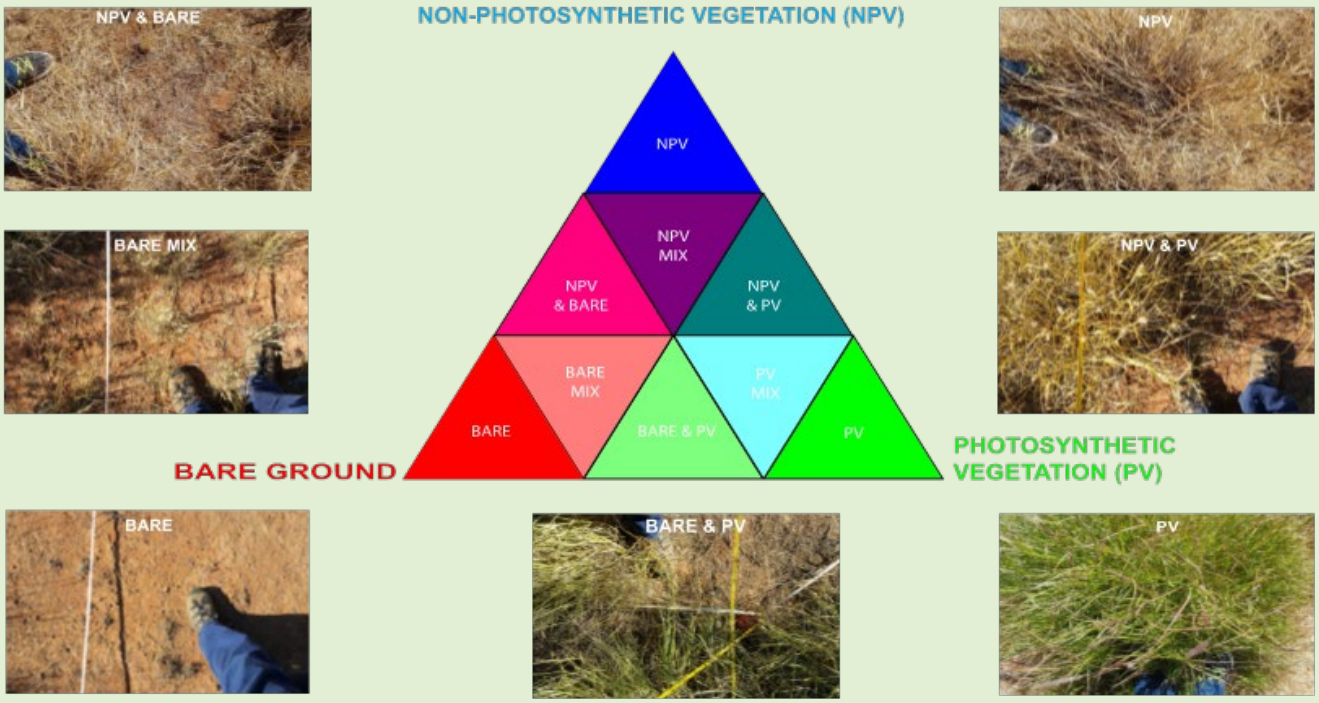


Figure 1. The three main fractions of cover and their mixtures or combinations as illustrated in fractional cover imagery.

The level of vegetation cover or bare ground present and its change over time is reported in two ways:

1. As the actual fraction present during a specified period. For this report, this is September to November 2024, termed 'spring composite', coinciding with the latter part of the Dry season for central and northern Pastoral Districts and the time when early summer storms may promote pasture growth in the southern NT.
2. As a decile rank of vegetation cover observed in late 2024 (using a winter or spring composite), relative to the same seasons from 1988 to the present.

RAINFALL

The amount, timing and effectiveness of rainfall is a major driver of the quantity, composition and quality of pastures. Monitoring data collected using ground and remote sensing-based methods must account for the effects of variable rainfall in understanding the impacts of stocking rates and grazing management on the vegetation resource.

Due to the large variation in annual rainfall across the Northern Territory, a comparison of location-specific rainfall against its longer-term history is a useful way of illustrating recent seasonal conditions (Figure 2).

FIRE

Fire and its effect on vegetation cover across the Northern Territory cannot be understated. This can be seasonal in the savannah landscapes of the central and northern parts of the Northern Territory or relatively infrequent and episodic in the southern arid region.

WOODY COVER

The density of trees and shrubs changes over time in many rangeland environments but generally at a slower rate than changes in the pasture layer. A particular issue facing the long-term sustainability of the pastoral industry in some landscapes is woody thickening, which can suppress pasture growth and reduce opportunities to use fire for broad-scale control of problem tree or shrub species. Two remote sensing products are being adapted to Northern Territory conditions to improve monitoring of vegetation cover dynamics. The first is a foliage projective cover product that discriminates woody cover from ground cover. The second is a probability-based model that allows ground cover under trees to be estimated. Both will allow improved monitoring of cover dynamics in woodland/ savannah environments when suitably refined and validated, and therefore may be of use in the future.

SEASONAL QUALITY

'Seasonal quality' describes the relative value of recent rainfall in producing forage for livestock. It is judged with reference to the historical record. Total rainfall is compared with the long-term median. Descriptors of seasonal quality provide useful context for interpreting various measures of land condition. However, to the extent possible, land condition is assessed independently of seasonal conditions.

Pixel (grid cell) values are calculated from rainfall amounts at recognised Bureau of Meteorology recording stations. Rainfall is measured from 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024 and therefore incorporates an entire growing season. Due to the considerable north-south gradient in long-term median rainfall for the VRD and Barkly Pastoral Districts, rainfall statistics are reported based on an arbitrary split of the region into two sub-districts to report on seasonal quality.

CRITERIA USED TO ASSESS LAND CONDITION

ASSESSING LAND CONDITION

Table 1 summarises how the pasture and woody layers, soil surface features and presence of any weeds are considered to assess land condition.

Table 1. Factors to assess land condition.

Land condition	Soil	Pasture	Weeds	Woodland and shrubland
A (Excellent) All of these features	No erosion and good surface condition	Good coverage of palatable perennial grasses in the north and annual forage species in the south, minimal bare ground in most years	No weeds	No signs of woody thickening
B (Good) At least one or more of these features	Minimal evidence of previous erosion or current erosion risk	Some decline in the presence of palatable grasses and other forage species, a small increase in bare ground	Small infestations of weeds	Some thickening in the density of woody plants
C (Fair) One or more of these features	Evidence of past erosion and/or current susceptibility to erosion	General decline in palatable perennial and annual grasses, an obvious increase in the amount of bare ground	Obvious presence of weeds	General thickening in the density of woody plants
D (Poor) One or more of these features	Severe erosion, scalding or compaction resulting in a hostile environment for plant growth	General lack of palatable forage species	Large weed infestations covering significant areas	Thickets of woody plants that cover a significant area

2024 MONITORING SEASON AND PASTORAL DISTRICTS

SEASONAL CONDITIONS

Rainfall from 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024 was compared to the long-term record was (Figure 2):

- Average to very much above average for large parts of the Northern Territory.
- The Katherine and Roper Pastoral Districts had mixed rainfall with isolated pockets receiving below to very much below average rainfall. Other parts received average to very much above average rainfall.
- The VRD, Sturt Plateau, Gulf and Darwin Pastoral Districts had very much above average rainfall.
- The Northern Alice Springs, Plenty, Tennant Creek and Barkly Pastoral Districts had average to very much above average.
- The Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District had average to much above average rainfall.

LAND CONDITION

Land condition was assessed using a combination of remotely sensed (satellite), field (site) data and lease inspections. Landsat data was used to indicate the proportions of vegetation cover (photosynthetic and non-photosynthetic) and bare ground in each pixel covering an area of 0.09ha. Change in each component has been examined since 1988, providing important information on cover dynamics over the last 36 years.

Figure 3 shows the relative levels of vegetation cover across the NT for spring 2024. Vegetation cover is typically influenced strongly by rainfall and the extent and intensity of fire. Grazing effects are usually more subtly reflected in changes in vegetation cover.

In 2024, general total vegetation cover broadly followed the rainfall patterns across most districts. The Katherine, Sturt Plateau, Roper, Barkly, Tennant Creek and Northern Alice Springs Pastoral Districts, with much above average to very much above average cover when compared to the longer-term baseline.

The Southern Alice Springs District had above average total vegetation cover in the northern areas that received above average rainfall.

Total vegetation cover Darwin the Victoria River District and Gulf was more variable, ranging from very much below average total vegetation cover in some patches to very much above average total vegetation cover in other areas despite receiving much above average to very much above average rainfall.

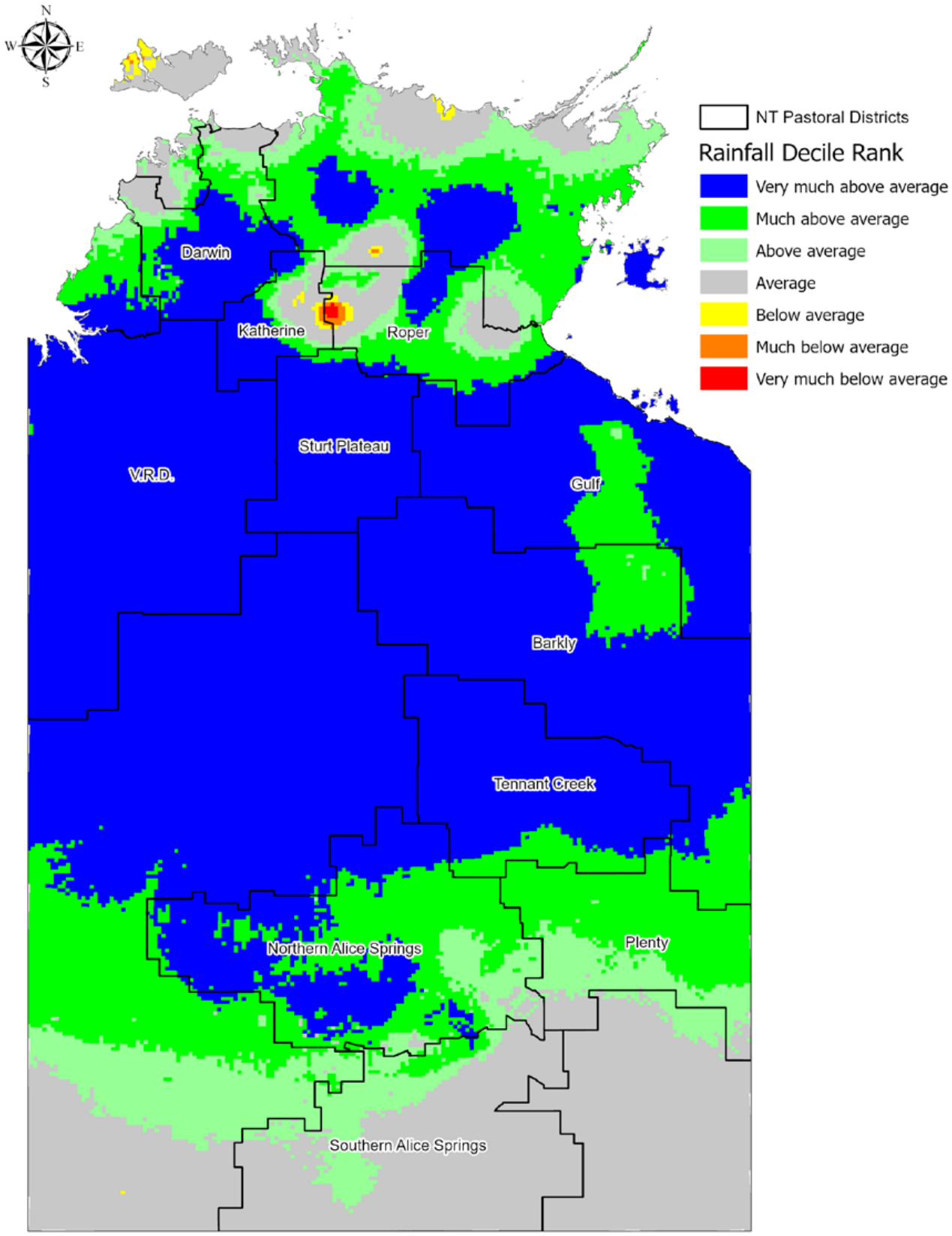


Figure 2. Decile ranked rainfall for May 2022 to April 2024.

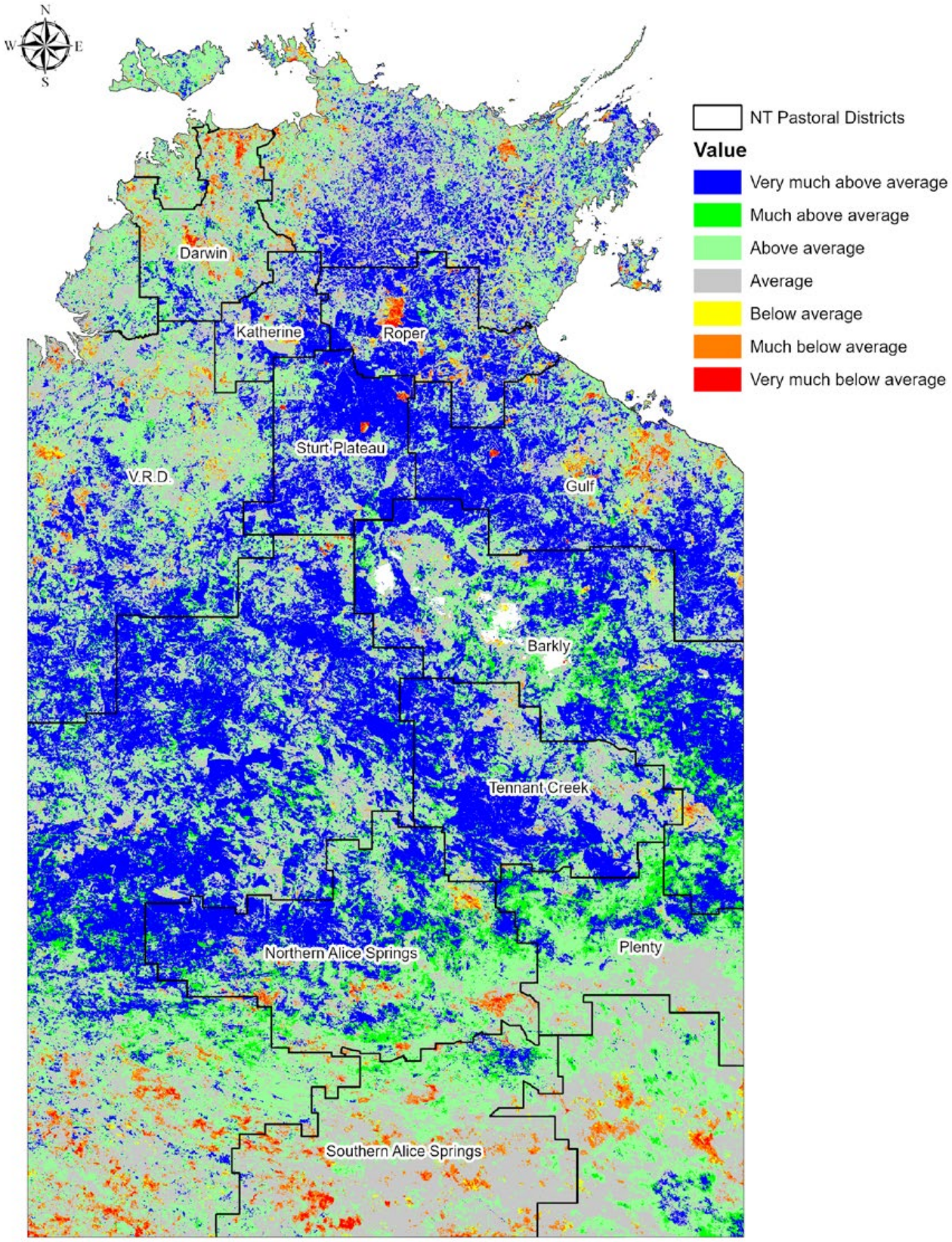


Figure 3. Decile ranked total vegetation cover for spring 2024 seasonal composite image.

LAND CONDITION TREND

The integrated monitoring program was introduced in 2013 and most pastoral leases have been monitored using this method twice. Table 2 shows land condition trends from the on-ground site inspections over time. The land condition rating of 30 pastoral leases improved or didn't change.

Three pastoral leases located in the Darwin, Roper, and Southern Alice Springs Pastoral Districts declined in land condition. Of these, one lease in the Darwin Pastoral District declined from condition C to D. The other two leases, in the Roper and Southern Alice Springs districts, declined from condition B to C. Additionally, one pastoral lease in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District remained unchanged at condition D.

Table 2. should be read in conjunction with the detailed comments on the inspection of each pastoral lease in each district, which provides for factors and accounts contributing to a change in land condition rating.

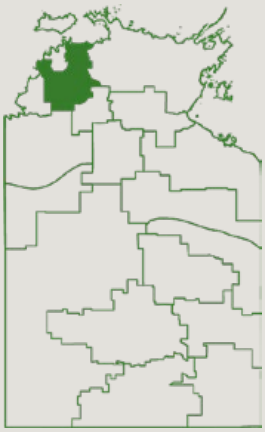
Table 2. 2024 Land condition assessment score and trend of leases since last assessment.

Pastoral lease	Land condition at previous inspection	2024 land condition	Land condition trend
Darwin Pastoral District			
1	B (2017)	B	Steady
2	B (2017)	B	Steady
3	C (2017)	C	Steady
4	B (2017)	B	Steady
5	C (2020)	D	Decline
Roper Pastoral District			
1	B (2017)	C	Decline
VRD Pastoral District			
1	C (2017)	B	Improve
2	C (2019)	C	Steady
3	C (2020)	B	Improve
4	C (2020)	B	Improve
5	C (2017)	C	Steady
6*	C (2020)	C	Steady
7	C (2020)	C	Steady

Pastoral lease	Land condition at previous inspection	2024 land condition	Land condition trend
Sturt Plateau Pastoral District			
1	C (2017)	C	Steady
2	B (2017)	B	Steady
3	B (2017)	B	Steady
Gulf Pastoral District			
1	C (2021)	B	Improve
Barkly Pastoral District			
1	C (2017)	B	Improve
2	B (2017)	B	Steady
3	D (2021)	C	Improve
4	C (2021)	C	Steady
Plenty Pastoral District			
1	B (2017)	B	Steady
2	D (2017)	C	Improve
Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District			
1	C (2017)	C	Steady
2	C (2018)	C	Steady
3	Fair/Poor	B	Improve
4	C (2018)	B	Improve
5	D (2019)	C	Improve
Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District			
1	D (2019)	D	Steady
2	B (2018)	B	Steady
3	B (2018)	C	Decline
4	C (2018)	C	Steady

*two pastoral leases

DARWIN PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Darwin Pastoral District covers 37 000 km^2 over 24 pastoral leases.

Rainfall in the Darwin Pastoral District was in the 10th decile, reflecting extremely high rainfall, with conditions classified as 'much above average' to 'very much above average' (Table 3). Average rainfall occurred across 13% of the district, while 53% recorded much above average to very much above average rainfall. Rainfall distribution varied with three distinct bands, average rainfall was confined to the northern and coastal zones with rainfall totals increasing to above average through the central section to very much above average in the southern zones of the district.

The Darwin Pastoral District experienced extensive and frequent fire activity in 2024 (Figure 4). Approximately 16,253 km^2, representing 43% of the district, was burnt during the year. The largest extent of fire occurred in May 2024, when over 21% of the district was affected (Figure 4).

Table 3. Rainfall for the Darwin Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	1629
Long-term median (1900–2023)	1272

DARWIN PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

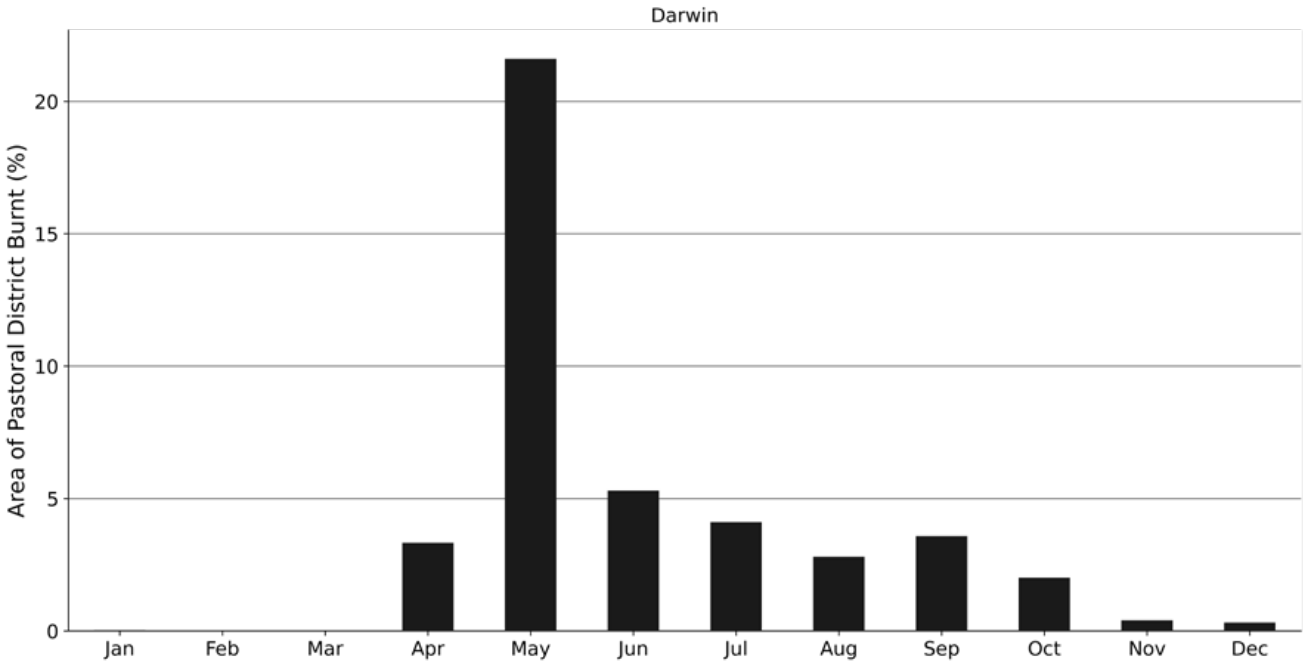


Figure 4. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Darwin Pastoral District.

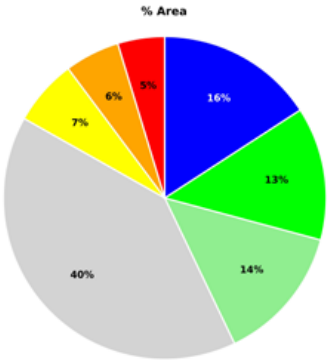
TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover across the Darwin Pastoral District in 2024 was variable (Figure 5).

Approximately 17% of the district recorded average vegetation cover, 13% was above average, 21% was much above average, and 46% was very much above average. In contrast, about 1% of the district had below to very much below average vegetation cover.

Overall, vegetation cover in 2024 was similar to that observed in 2023. Vegetation growth in the Darwin Pastoral District tends to be less responsive to rainfall compared to other districts, suggesting that once rainfall exceeds a certain threshold, growth levels off. Areas with below to very much below average vegetation cover typically correspond to fire scars or cropping areas.

DARWIN PASTORAL DISTRICT



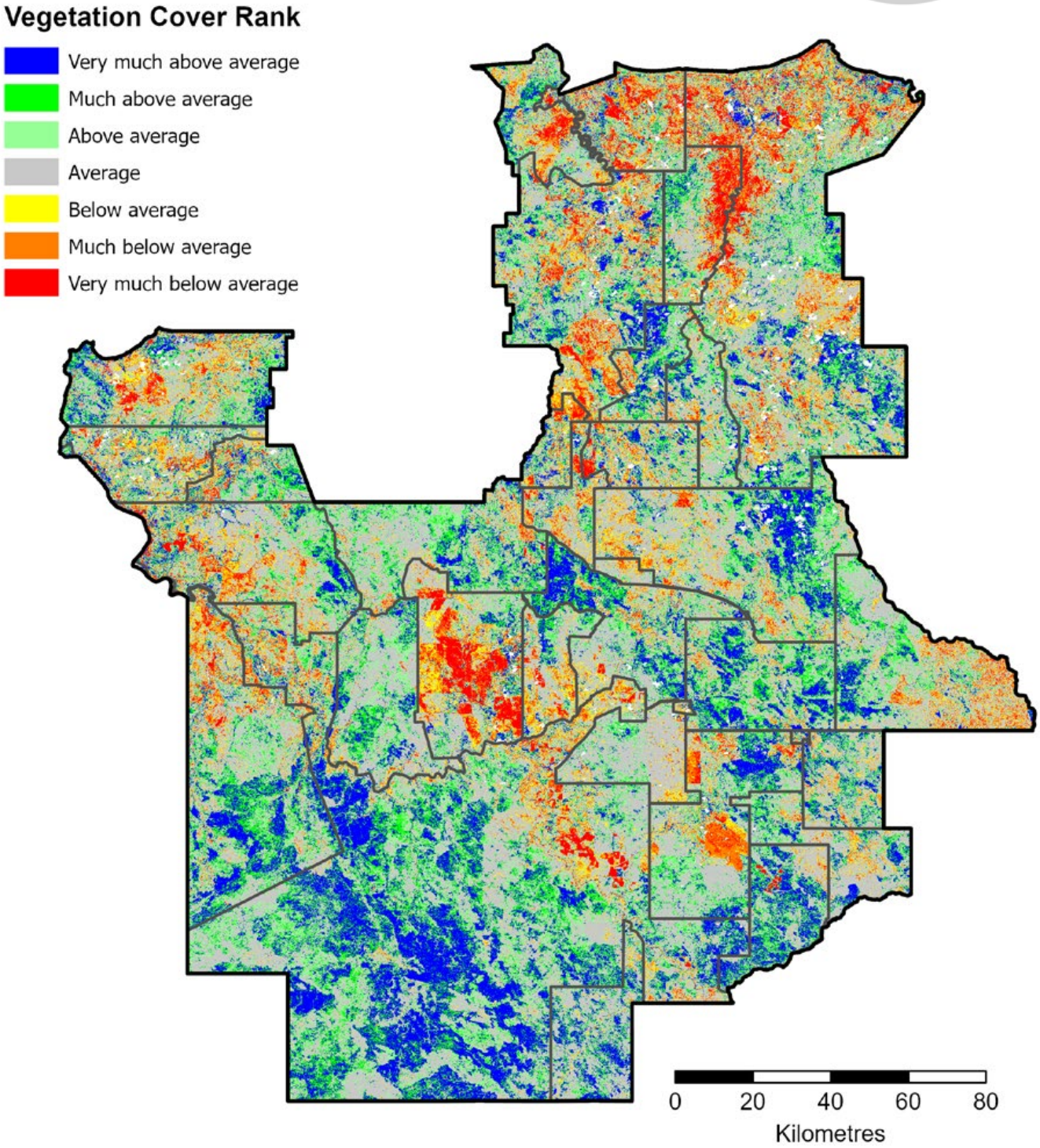


Figure 5. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Darwin Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

DARWIN PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

Five pastoral leases in the Darwin Pastoral District were visited in 2024.

Across these leases, 36 sites were assessed, and ground layer vegetation cover was measured at 12 Integrated Monitoring sites.

Vegetation cover was generally good at most sites (Table 3). Perennial grasses dominated the ground layer, followed by forbs and herbs, litter, and variable annual grasses. Integrated monitoring sites assessed as being in A or B condition had a high overall vegetation cover (79%), predominantly consisting of 3P (perennial, productive, and palatable) grasses. Most sites were in B condition, characterised by high cover of desirable perennial grasses. Sites in C or D condition also had high vegetation cover; however, these areas were often dominated by unpalatable species, increaser species, or weeds.

Summary information from individual lease land condition reports is provided in Table 4

Table 3. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Darwin Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	4	19	72	10	70	0	2
B	6	20	70	10	42	6	22
C	1	0	99	0	71	17	10
D	1	0	100	0	92	2	6

Table 4. Summary of land condition assessments in the Darwin Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	B	A: 2	B: 3	C: 2	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with its condition ratings in 2017 and 2008. Pasture growth was generally very good across the lease, with a high abundance of palatable grasses. Despite a wildfire affecting approximately 40% of the lease shortly before the 2024 inspection, bare ground levels were not significantly higher than during the previous assessment

PASTURE: Pasture growth was generally very good across the pastoral lease, with a high abundance of palatable grasses, including plume sorghum, golden beard grass, kangaroo grass, and native millet.

Pan wanderrie was recorded on the lease for the first time in 2024.

In cleared areas, improved pasture species such as koronivia grass had been established.

WEEDS: Class B weeds, including mimosa and hyptis, were recorded in low numbers in the central part of the pastoral lease. Several introduced species, such as annual mission grass and calopo vine, were also observed..

EROSION: No erosion was observed during the inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: Buffalo were sighted in the western part of the pastoral lease.

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was not widespread on the property, with some thickening of melaleuca identified in the western part of the property.

DARWIN PASTORAL DISTRICT

B	B	A: 1	B: 4	C: 3	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with the results of previous inspections in 2008 and 2017. Overall, land condition was generally good, with abundant pasture across most accessible areas. Some areas showed signs of degradation, such as changes in species composition, reduced cover of desirable pasture grasses, presence of weeds, erosion, or evidence of feral animals.

PASTURE: Pasture growth was generally good throughout the pastoral lease, with site condition mostly ranging between B and C. Perennial grass cover was abundant overall, with a variety of 3P grass species present, including kangaroo grass, golden beard grass, and plume sorghum. However, annual grasses dominated in some areas. Bare ground levels were intermittently high during the inspection, likely due to sustained grazing in some areas and a large portion of the lease had been burnt shortly before the 2024 inspection.

WEEDS: Four class B weeds were identified during the 2024 inspection. Gamba grass was found in the northern part of the lease; mission grass was recorded along a laneway in the western area; hyptis was present along a laneway near the homestead and in the south-western part of the property; and spiny sida was found near the airstrip.

EROSION: Some erosion was observed in various parts of the property. Gully erosion was recorded along a vehicle track in the northern section. An area of both sheet and gully erosion was noted in the southern part of the property and around a swampy area, which is likely naturally occurring.

FERAL ANIMALS: Evidence of feral animals was recorded across the property, including sightings of wild buffalo and signs of trampling from feral pigs.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was recorded during the inspection.

Pastoral lease 3					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: -	B: 2	C: 4	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with the 2017 assessment. Sites assessed in 2024 recorded an absence or low abundance of 3P grasses. Floodplain sites generally had good cover of expected sedges and perennial grasses, while savannah sites were in poorer condition, dominated by annuals and lacking palatable perennial grass cover, likely due to frequent fires. Two class B weeds were recorded. High levels of woody regrowth were noted in areas previously cleared for improved pasture, suggesting a lack of follow-up management, as well as in the Kay land system sites, exacerbated by recent fires and high fire frequency. Erosion was not observed. Buffalo were present on the floodplains and are being actively managed through export sales. There is some concern about the spread of mimosa on the floodplain and woody regrowth in cleared areas; however, these impacts should be manageable. It is recommended that the property continue to be included in routine rangelands monitoring.

PASTURE: There was an absence or low abundance of pasture across the pastoral lease. The floodplain sites, which are inundated for 3 to 6 months each year, were dominated by perennial sedges (Eleocharis and Scleria genera), with swamp panic and Blady grass also present. These sites are not highly productive for pastoral use, as they are dominated by sedges and less palatable grasses typical of shallow subcoastal floodplains in the Darwin region. Outside the floodplains, native pasture was scarce, with unpalatable love grass and fairy grass being the only perennial grasses recorded.

WEEDS: Two declared class B weeds were recorded. Mimosa was found in floodplain areas, with a noted decline in control since the previous inspection. Sicklepod was moderately abundant in several drier areas, occurring in large patches.

DARWIN PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 4

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	B	A: 3	B: 4	C: -	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with its 2017 rating. The property undertakes early season burns as part of carbon farming. On-ground observations showed high soil moisture, good perennial tussock recovery after recent fires, and widespread green pick in burnt areas. Remote sensing indicated strong pasture recovery following the below-average wet season, with no large areas of persistent bare ground from grazing. No heavy grazing was observed outside smaller paddocks near the homestead. All assessed sites were in A or B condition and had high cover of expected pasture species.

PASTURE: The property has responded well to recent above-average rainfall, resulting in high pasture abundance across all paddocks. Dominant 3P grasses included kangaroo grass, plume sorghum, ribbon grass, and golden beard grass.

WEEDS: Five class B weeds (gamba grass, grader grass, hyptis, spiny sida, and coffee bush) were recorded, most common in smaller central paddocks and along roadsides, creeks, and riverbanks. Overall abundance was low, except for hyptis, which was widespread.

EROSION: Erosion was limited and mainly confined to old roads and moderate gully erosion along creek lines, likely reflecting natural processes given local rainfall patterns.

FERAL ANIMALS: Feral horses, donkeys, and buffalo were observed. Buffalo were abundant but are managed through live export.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

Pastoral lease 5

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
D	C	A: 1	B: 2	C: 3	D: 2

GENERAL COMMENTS: The lease was assessed in D condition in 2024, declining from C in 2020. Previously cleared areas with improved pasture have degraded and are now dominated by black spear grass and weeds, severely reducing carrying capacity. In contrast, land condition away from these areas was much better, with northern and southern paddocks showing good perennial grass cover and little disturbance. However, there was no evidence of active grazing management at the time of inspection. Large infestations of mimosa and chinee apple were observed, with no recent weed control evident.

There is concern about the lack of active land management, which has reduced carrying capacity and poses risks to neighbouring properties through weed and feral spread and altered fire regimes. It is recommended the lessee engage with DLPE Weed Branch and DAF Livestock Branch to improve management.

PASTURE: The northeast had good perennial grass cover, including plume sorghum, golden beard grass, and giant spear grass, with little recent disturbance. The central cleared area, sown with improved pastures, contained Jarra grass but was dominated by black spear grass, annuals, and weeds. Other sites were in C or D condition due to low perennial grass cover and dominance of black spear grass.

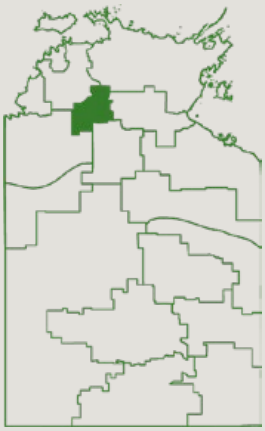
WEEDS: Significant infestations of class A weeds (mimosa, chinee apple) and class B weeds (hyptis, sida, senna, grader grass, gamba grass) were widespread, particularly in cleared paddocks and along major creeks.

EROSION: Some gully erosion was noted along tracks and creeks, likely due to soil type and heavy wet season rainfall.

FERAL ANIMALS: Some gully erosion was noted along tracks and creeks, likely due to soil type and heavy wet season rainfall.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed.

KATHERINE PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Katherine Pastoral District covers 19 000 km^2 over nine pastoral leases.

Rainfall across the Katherine Pastoral District was in the 10th decile, reflecting extremely high rainfall, with conditions classified as 'much above average' to 'very much above average' across the Pastoral District (Table 5). Much above average rainfall was recorded over 14% of the district, and very much above average rainfall was recorded over 53% of the district.

The Katherine Pastoral District experienced a short but extensive fire season in 2024 (Figure 6). Approximately 5,543 km^2, or 28% of the district, was burnt between April and December. The highest fire activity occurred in April and October, each accounting for about 14% of the area burnt.

Table 5. Rainfall for the Katherine Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	1288
Long-term median (1900–2023)	892

KATHERINE PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

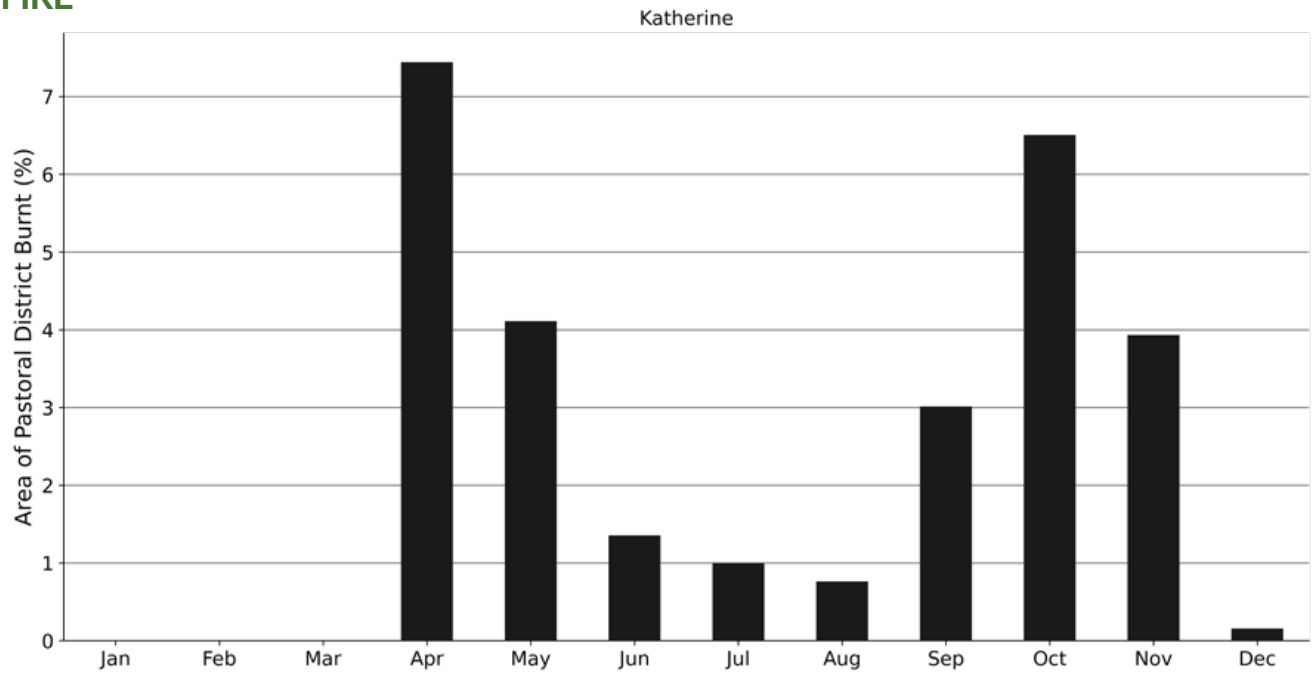


Figure 6. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Katherine Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover was very much above average across 35% of the Katherine Pastoral District in 2024 (Figure 7). Approximately 14% of the district was much above average, 11% above average, 31% average, and 8% below to very much below average.

Overall, vegetation cover was similar to 2023, reflecting the much above average rainfall received across most of the district. Pasture distribution generally mirrored fire activity from 2023 and 2024.

SITE-BASED MONIORING

No monitoring sites were inspected in the Katherine Pastoral District in 2024.

KATHERINE PASTORAL DISTRICT

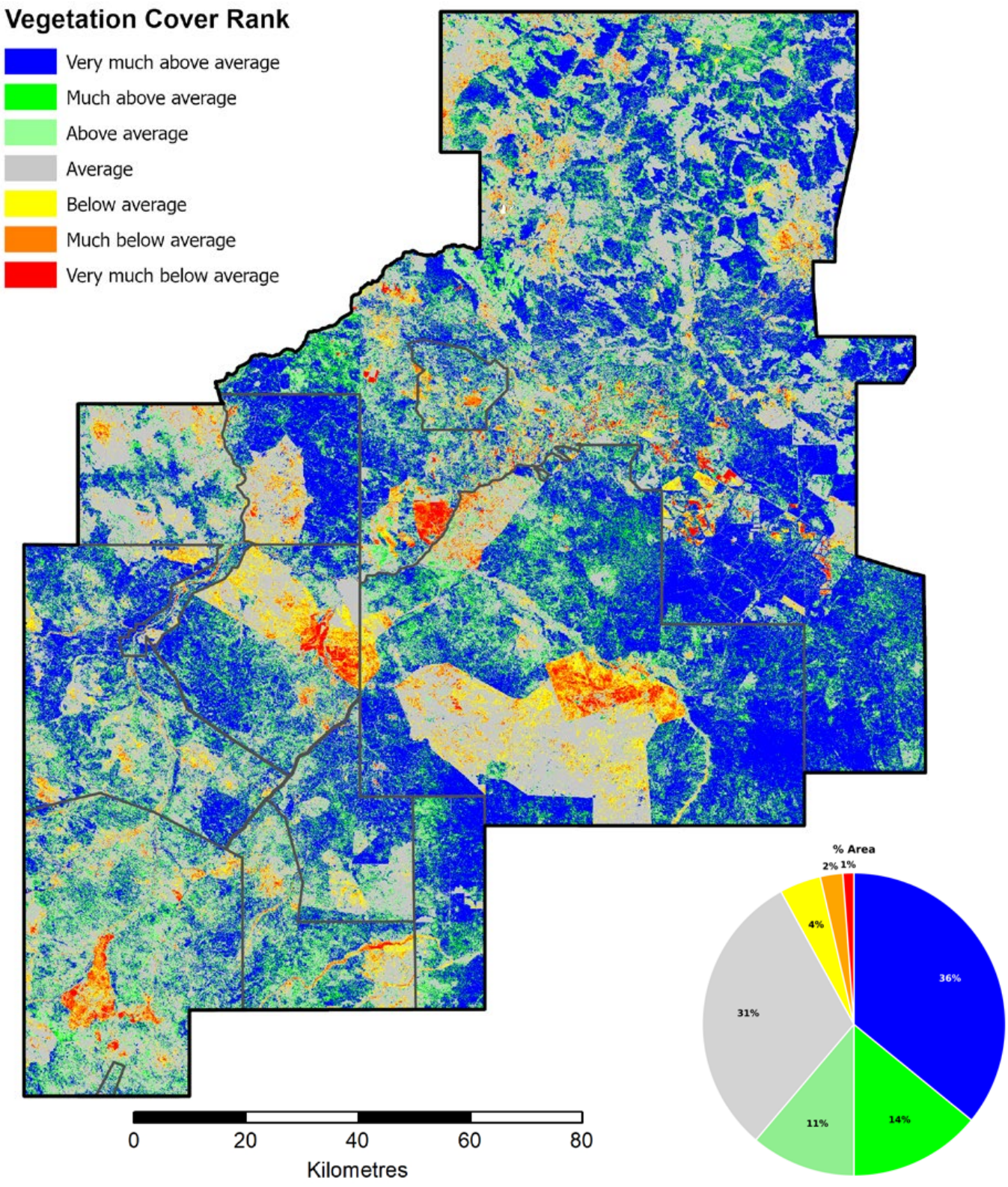
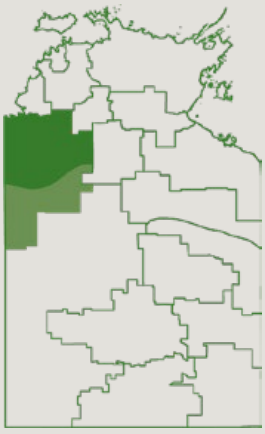


Figure 7. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Katherine Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT



The VRD Pastoral District covers 134 000 km² over 25 pastoral leases.

Rainfall was very much above average across most (99%) of the VRD Pastoral District, with the remaining 0.06% of the district receiving much above average rainfall. Due to the considerable north-south gradient in long-term median rainfall for the VRD Pastoral District, rainfall is reported as sub-districts (Table 6). Spatially averaged rainfall for the north and south sub-districts of the VRD Pastoral District were both above the long-term median (Table 6).

The VRD Pastoral District recorded a reduction in total area burnt compared to the previous year. Approximately 33 563 km² (25% of the district) was burnt between January and December 2024 (Figure 8). Fires occurred in most months except February, with peak activity in October (7%), about half the area burnt in the same month in 2023.

Table 6. Rainfall for the VRD Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	VRD North	VRD South
2024	2110	1536
Long-term median (1900–2023)	722	480

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

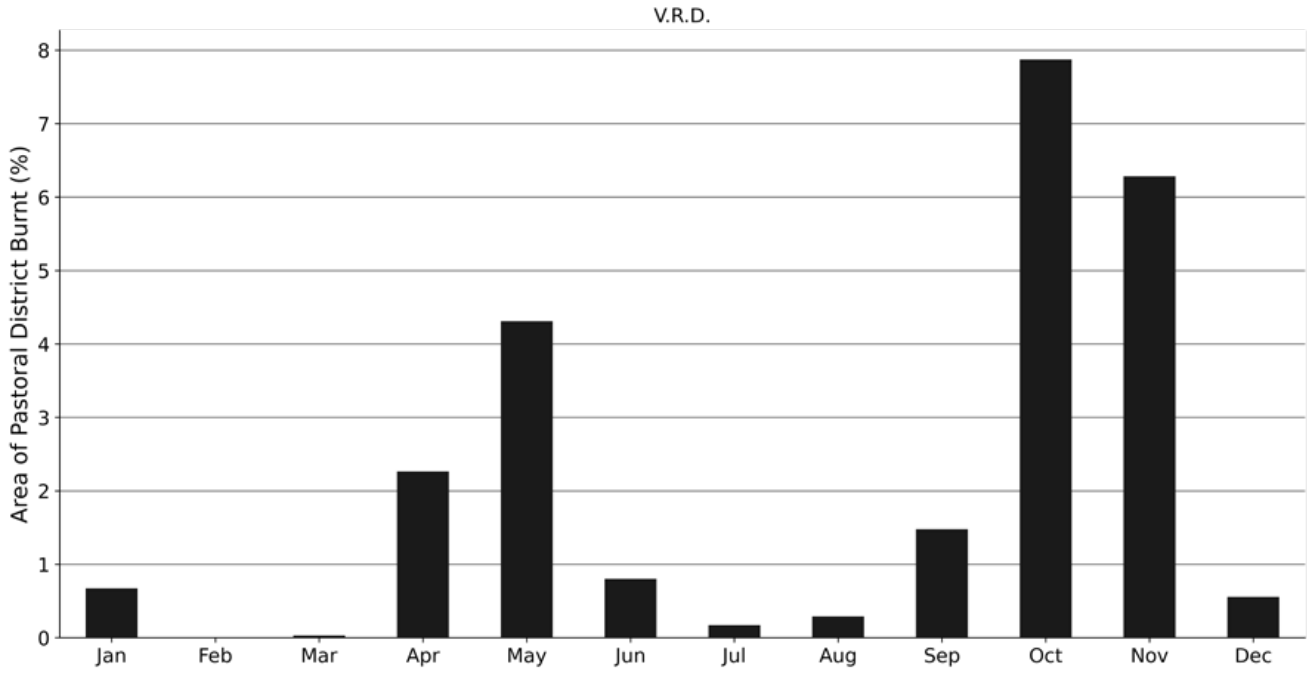


Figure 8. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the VRD Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover was highly variable across the VRD Pastoral District in 2024 (Figure 9). Approximately 29% of the district was average, 64% was above to very much above average, and 7% was below to very much below average. Vegetation cover was generally above average, particularly in the south, while the northern areas showed a more scattered pattern, including some patches of very much below average cover. Overall, vegetation condition largely reflected fire, rainfall, and grazing pressures.

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT

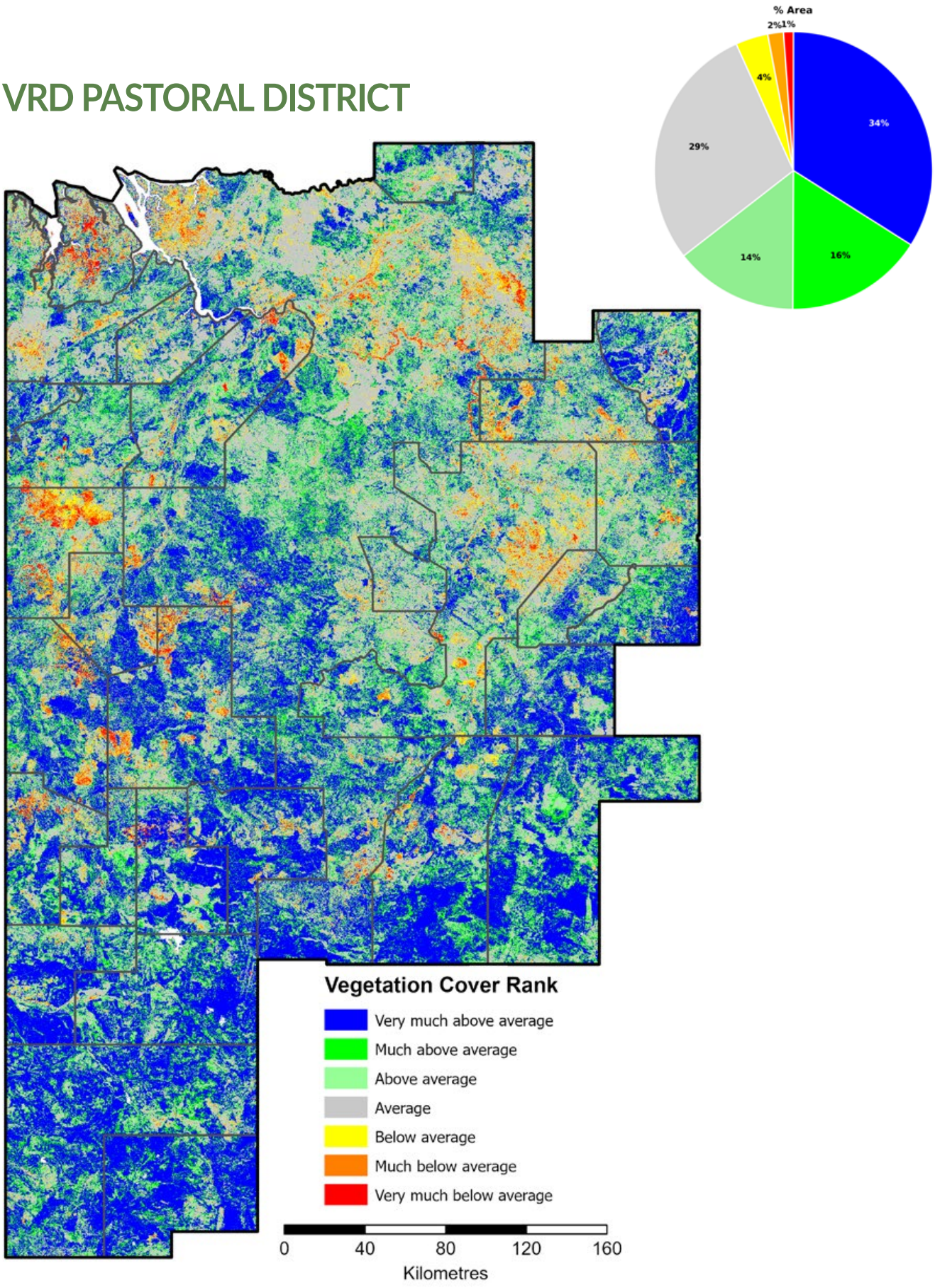


Figure 9. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the VRD Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

Eight pastoral leases in the VRD Pastoral District were visited in 2024.

Vegetation cover was measured at 39 integrated monitoring sites across the district (Table 7). Most sites were in B condition, with an average of about 72% perennial grass cover. Monitoring Officers noted varying levels of erosion, weeds, and feral animal impacts on the inspected leases.

Most other sites were in B to C condition, with a higher proportion of 3P grasses responding well to a third consecutive year of above average rainfall.

Summary information from individual lease land condition reports is provided in Table 8.

Table 7. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the VRD Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	8	7	87	7	68	12	7
B	12	13	72	15	52	9	12
C	13	18	71	11	41	17	13
D	6	27	60	13	13	34	14

Table 8. Summary of land condition assessment in the VRD Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	C	A: -	B: 5	C: 4	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, an improvement from C in 2017. The property has responded well to three consecutive above-average wet seasons, with strong recovery from the November 2023 fires. Most sites showed a marked decrease in unpalatable forbs and an increase in perennial grasses. Erosion was limited to gully erosion in the west. Class B weeds remain confined to mapped areas and are reported as under control. There are no current concerns regarding land condition.

PASTURE: Perennial grass cover has improved across most sites, with a significant reduction in unpalatable forbs. One site was flood-affected. Bluegrass previously recorded at two sites in 2017 was not observed in 2024.

WEEDS: Class B weeds (rubber bush, hyptis, parkinsonia, spinyhead sida) were restricted to mapped areas and are under active management. Buffel grass was observed in isolated spots.

EROSION: Active gully erosion was observed in the west but was not widespread.

FERAL ANIMALS: Low feral presence, with only a single camel observed in the west and horse tracks in the southeast.

WOODY THICKENING: Some thickening was observed.

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 2

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2019)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: 2	B: 9	C: 4	D: -

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its condition rating in 2019. Pasture abundance was generally very good across accessible areas, reflecting the very high rainfall before the inspection. Weeds remain the main land condition concern, particularly in inundation-prone riverine areas that aid their spread.

PASTURE: Strong vegetation recovery was evident in 2024, reversing previous bare ground areas from poor wet seasons before 2019. Dominant 3P species included native millet, silky browntop, golden beard grass, Mitchell grasses, and barley Mitchell grass.

WEEDS: Six class B weeds were recorded: rubber bush (widespread, especially near rivers), noogoora burr and neem (riparian zones), parkinsonia (small patches), hyptis (common around yards and bare areas), and sida/sicklepod (notably north of the homestead). Riverine flats were most affected and require further control. Mesquite was not observed but parts of the lease were inaccessible.

EROSION: Severe gully erosion was present north of the homestead paddock, with moderate gullying in the northeast and sheet erosion in the south. These issues are likely worsened by heavy wet season rainfall.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

Pastoral lease 3

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2020)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	C	A: 4	B: 4	C: 3	D: 1

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, an improvement from C in 2020 and consistent with its 2015 rating. Above-average wet seasons in 2022/23 and 2023/24 supported strong pasture recovery, particularly in the Wave Hill land system where 3P grasses increased markedly.

PASTURE: Good pasture recovery was evident across the property, reflecting above-average rainfall. Dominant perennial species included barley Mitchell grass, Queensland bluegrass, native millet, and hoop Mitchell grass; dominant annuals included red Flinders grass and native couch.

WEEDS: Class B weeds rubber bush (moderate densities near inspection sites) and parkinsonia (moderate to high densities in the east) were recorded. Further control measures will be necessary to limit their spread.

EROSION: Gully erosion was observed along trafficked areas. The existing mitigation structures appear effective.

FERAL ANIMALS: Donkeys were recorded in the south-central section and feral dogs in the northeast, but not in high numbers.

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was not observed during the inspection.

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 4

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2020)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	C	A: 4	B: 7	C: 3	D: -

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, an improvement from C in 2020. Pasture abundance has increased significantly following consecutive above-average wet seasons. Investment in grazing infrastructure has improved capacity for strategic spelling and distribution of grazing pressure. There is currently no cause for concern regarding land condition.

PASTURE: Pasture growth was strong across the lease, reflecting above-average rainfall. Dominant perennial species included Mitchell grasses, golden beard grass, barley Mitchell grass, native millet, bull Mitchell grass, Queensland bluegrass, curly bluegrass, and silky browntop. Southern and eastern areas were dominated by less palatable spinifex.

WEEDS: Class B weeds recorded were noogoora burr (northwest riparian zones) and parkinsonia (central areas).

EROSION: Gully erosion was present along trafficked areas. Mitigation measures, including whoa boys and diversion banks, appears to be successful.FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: Feral animals were not observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was not observed during the inspection.

Pastoral lease 5

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: -	B: 7	C: 8	D: 2

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its condition rating in 2017. Above-average wet season rainfall supported high vegetation cover across much of the property. While conditions were mixed, there were sufficient areas with good palatable pasture to allow spelling of more degraded areas.

PASTURE: Eastern paddocks were mostly in B–C condition, with B areas showing good perennial grass cover and C areas having lower perennial cover and more increaser species or weeds. Dominant perennial species included native millet, golden beard grass, and curly bluegrass. Variation in land systems and scattered water sources contributed to uneven grazing pressure and patchy condition across the lease.

WEEDS: Class B weeds observed included parkinsonia, sicklepod, hyptis, and noogoora burr. Hyptis was common in disturbed areas; the others were mostly limited to small riparian zones and around the old homestead.

EROSION: Gully erosion occurred along an old road in the centre and a washed-out section of the main western access road.

FERAL ANIMALS: Donkeys and pigs were seen in low numbers in the north.

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was not observed during the inspection.

VRD PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 6*

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2020)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: 2	B: 6	C: 5	D: 1

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its 2020 rating. Above-average rainfall in 2023–24 supported increased pasture cover and biomass across much of the lease, although some areas showed signs of heavy grazing pressure.

PASTURE: Pasture cover and biomass improved significantly with above-average rainfall, though some areas showed signs of overgrazing, high increaser species, and exposed ground. The western grasslands were largely inaccessible during the inspection. Most A and B sites supported good perennial grass cover, while areas under heavy grazing were assessed as C. Dominant 3P grasses included golden beard grass, native millet, silky browntop, curly bluegrass, and plume sorghum.

WEEDS: Six class B weeds (hyptis, rubber bush, spiny sida, sicklepod, parkinsonia, noogoora burr) were present, mainly around roads and water points. The class A weed datura was also found, including a dense patch in the south.

EROSION: Sheet erosion was observed on sloping hills under heavy grazing, especially in the south-east. Severe gully erosion was present near a southern water point, linked to intense rainfall and reduced ground cover.

FERAL ANIMALS: Horses, donkeys, and pigs were sighted.

WOODY THICKENING: Soap bush and turpentine thickening occurred mainly in the south.

Pastoral lease 7

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2020)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: -	B: 6	C: 6	D: 4

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its 2020 rating. The very much above-average 2023–24 wet season supported increased pasture cover and biomass across most of the property. Some paddocks in the northwest showed limited recovery due to ongoing grazing, and the eastern paddocks had high woody cover.

PASTURE: Above-average rainfall led to strong pasture growth across most sites. Clay grasslands were generally in B or C condition, reflecting varying perennial grass cover. Some areas in the northwest remained in D condition due to heavy ongoing grazing and low perennial cover, a long-term issue since the 1990s. In contrast, southern areas nearby showed higher perennial cover and improvement. Dominant 3P species included native millet, curly bluegrass, hoop Mitchell grass, golden beard grass, and barley Mitchell grass

WEEDS: Three class B weeds were present: noogoora burr (abundant in riparian zones in the northwest), rubber bush (widespread at low levels), and parkinsonia (more common east of the homestead).

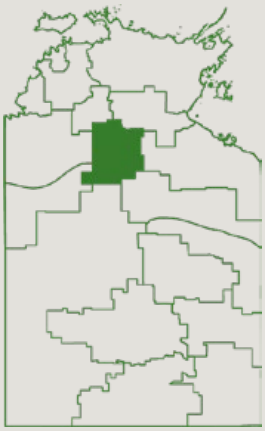
EROSION: Sheet and minor gully erosion occurred in the west.

FERAL ANIMALS: Low numbers of feral horses, donkeys, and pigs were seen in the west.

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was observed in the southeast but is not currently a major issue. Some areas may benefit from medium-intensity fires to reduce density.

*two pastoral leases

STURT PLATEAU PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Sturt Plateau Pastoral District covers 43 000 km^2 over 31 pastoral leases.

Rainfall across the Stuart Plateau Pastoral District was in the 10th decile, reflecting extremely high rainfall amounts, with conditions classified as 'much above average' to 'very much above average' across the Pastoral District (Table 9). Very much above average rainfall was recorded across 97% of the district, with 2% having much above average rainfall and the remaining 1% having above average.

Smaller fires occurred in the earlier in the year across parts of the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District with the majority of the fire season occurring in October and November in 2024 (Figure 10). Approximately 9057 km^2 (21%) of the district was burnt, mainly between Oct to Dec 2024 (Figure 10).

Table 9. Rainfall for the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	1247
Long-term median (1900–2023)	624

STURT PLATEAU PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

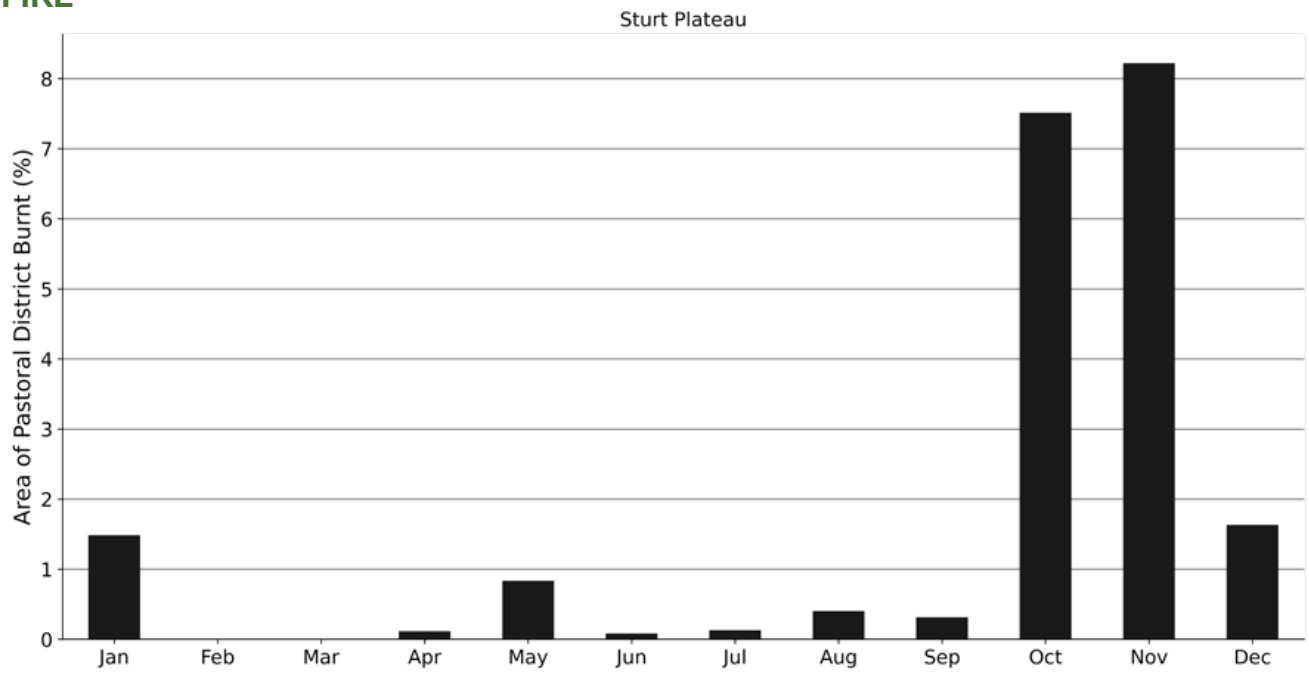


Figure 10. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover was very much above average across most of the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District in 2024 (Figure 11). Approximately 57% of the district was very much above average and approximately 26% was above average to much above average, with the remaining 17% being average or below.

Overall, vegetation cover in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District in 2024 largely correlated with very much above average rainfall especially in the northeast part of the Pastoral District. Some noticeable hotspots of very much below average vegetation cover are evident in isolated section of the Pastoral District, the largest ones are likely the result of fires with the smaller hotspots in the districts northwest likely the result of land cultivation associated with cropping.

STURT PLATEAU PASTORAL DISTRICT

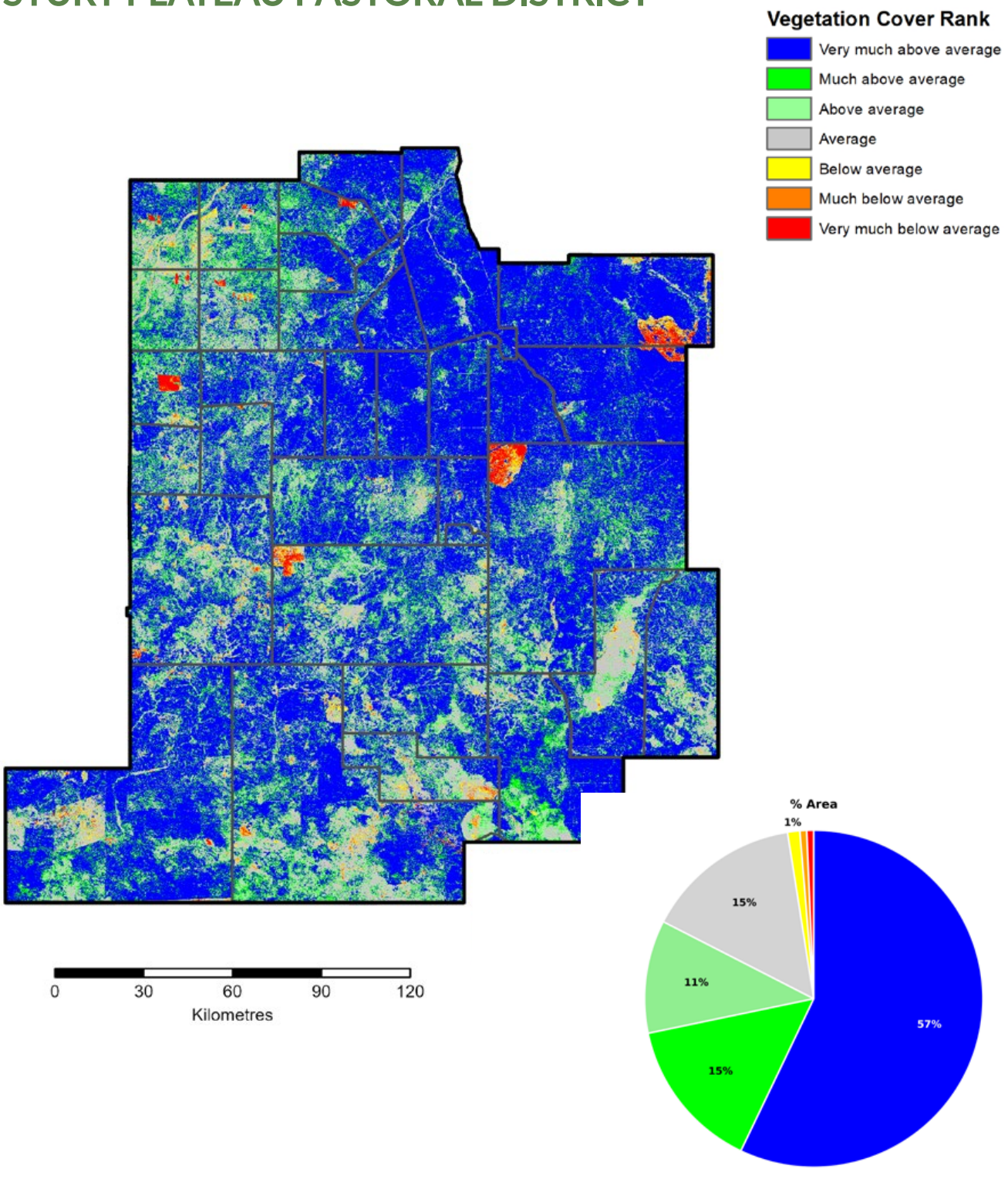


Figure 11. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

STURT PLATEAU PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

Three pastoral leases in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District were visited in 2024.

Vegetation cover of the ground layer was measured at eight sites on these leases (Table 10).

Vegetation cover was high at most sites with 4 sites in A - B condition. These sites had high total vegetation cover dominated by perennial grasses, such as golden beard grass, white grass and plume sorghum.

The other four sites were in C. While maintain high vegetation cover These sites had a lower proportion of 3P grasses; some weeds particularly hyptis and spiny head sida and forbs were present at these sites.

Information from individual lease land condition reports is summarised in Table 11.

Table 10. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	3	6	82	12	74	4	4
B	1	1	64	36	61	3	0
C	4	8	59	34	15	33	11
D	-	–	–	–	–	–	–

Table 11. Summary of land condition assessment in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2023 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: –	B: 1	C: 4	D: 1

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2023, consistent with its 2017 rating. The recent above-average wet season led to rapid recovery of annual grasses after several poor seasons, and tussocks of perennial grasses were present, indicating potential for further improvement.

PASTURE: Ground cover was high but dominated by annual grasses and forbs. The strong wet season prompted a quick increase in annual species, providing short-term feed while perennial grasses continue to recover. Dominant perennial species included golden beard grass and plume sorghum.

WEEDS: No major weed populations were observed during the inspection.

EROSION: No areas of erosion were found during the inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during this inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No areas of woody thickening were observed during the inspection.

STURT PLATEAU PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 2

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	B	A: 2	B: 4	C: 6	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with its 2017 rating. The very much above-average wet season prior to the inspection supported high pasture cover, with A condition sites dominated by 3P grasses and minimal disturbance. Weed abundance was generally low. No feral animals or significant erosion were observed. There is no current cause for concern regarding land condition.

PASTURE: The good wet season resulted in high pasture cover across most paddocks. A condition sites were dominated by 3P grasses, while most paddocks were in B condition. Some C areas showed acacia thickening and higher annual grass presence. Dominant 3P grasses included white grass, kangaroo grass, golden beard grass, silky browntop, plume sorghum, and curly bluegrass.

WEEDS: Class B weeds such as hyptis and sida species were seen mainly along the north–south road from the homestead. Parkinsonia was present in low abundance near a central waterhole. Overall weed levels were low.

EROSION: No areas of erosion were found during the inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Minor thickening was present west of the homestead.

Pastoral lease 3

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	B	A: 1	B: 7	C: 4	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with its 2017 rating. Much above-average wet season rainfall supported strong pasture growth throughout the lease.

PASTURE: Pasture cover was high across most paddocks, reflecting strong seasonal rainfall. Smaller paddocks near the homestead used for hay production provided additional feed and likely helped reduce grazing pressure elsewhere. Dominant 3P grasses included golden beard grass, kangaroo grass, and plume sorghum.

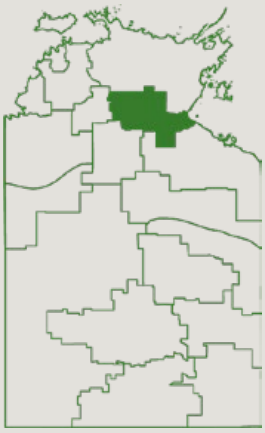
WEEDS: Flannel weed, hyptis, and spinyhead sida were found mainly around water points and heavily trafficked areas, all at low abundance.

EROSION: No areas of erosion were found during the inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Some areas showed multi-species thickening.

ROPER PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Roper Pastoral District covers 42 000 km^2 over 11 pastoral leases.

Rainfall in 2024 was in the 9th decile, classified as much above average across the district. Above-average to much above average rainfall fell across 55% of the area, very much above average in 24%, average in 18%, and below to very much below average in 3% (Table 12).

The district also experienced regular fire activity in 2024, with approximately 17,227 km^2 (40%) burnt between January and December. Fires began in April, with peaks in May and November (Figure 12).

Table 12. Rainfall for the Roper Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	1046
Long-term median (1900–2023)	777

ROPER PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

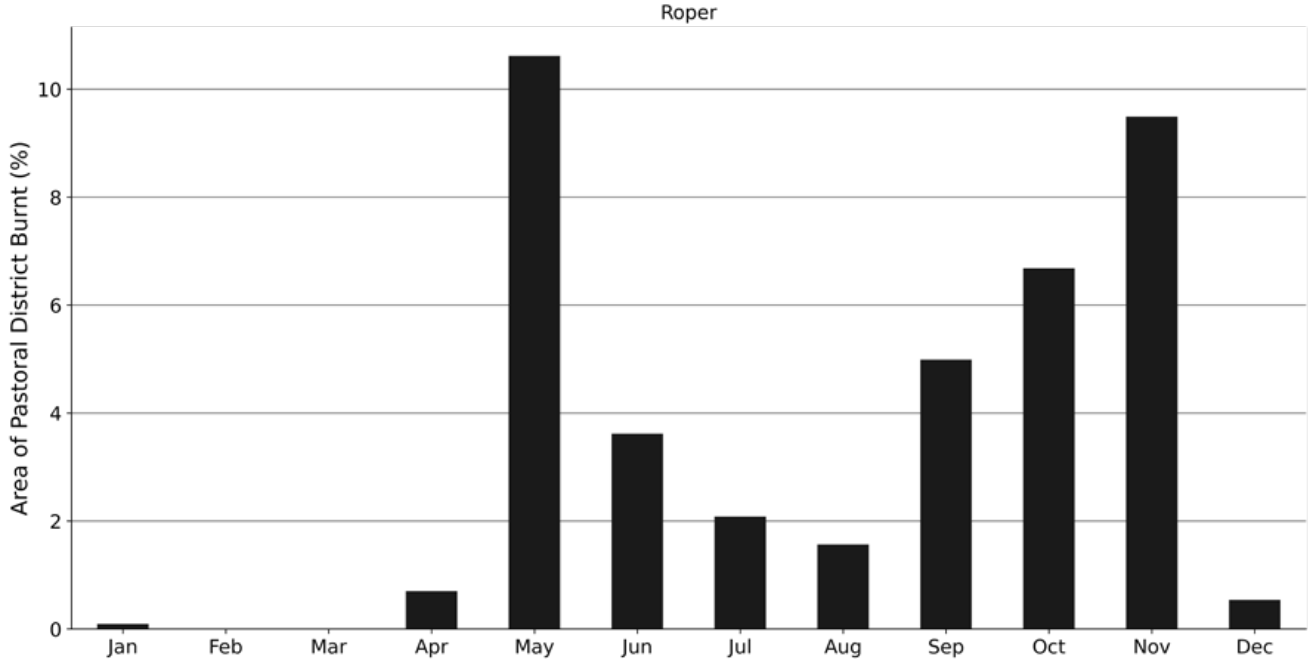
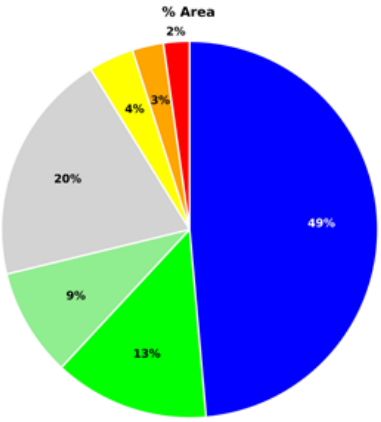


Figure 12. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Roper Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover was generally much above average to very much above average across the Roper Pastoral District during 2024. Approximately 49% of the Roper Pastoral District was very much above average and 20% was above average (Figure 13). Below average to very much below average conditions were sporadic throughout the district, affecting approximately 9% of the district. One notable section in the west of the district was likely affected by fire.

ROPER PASTORAL DISTRICT



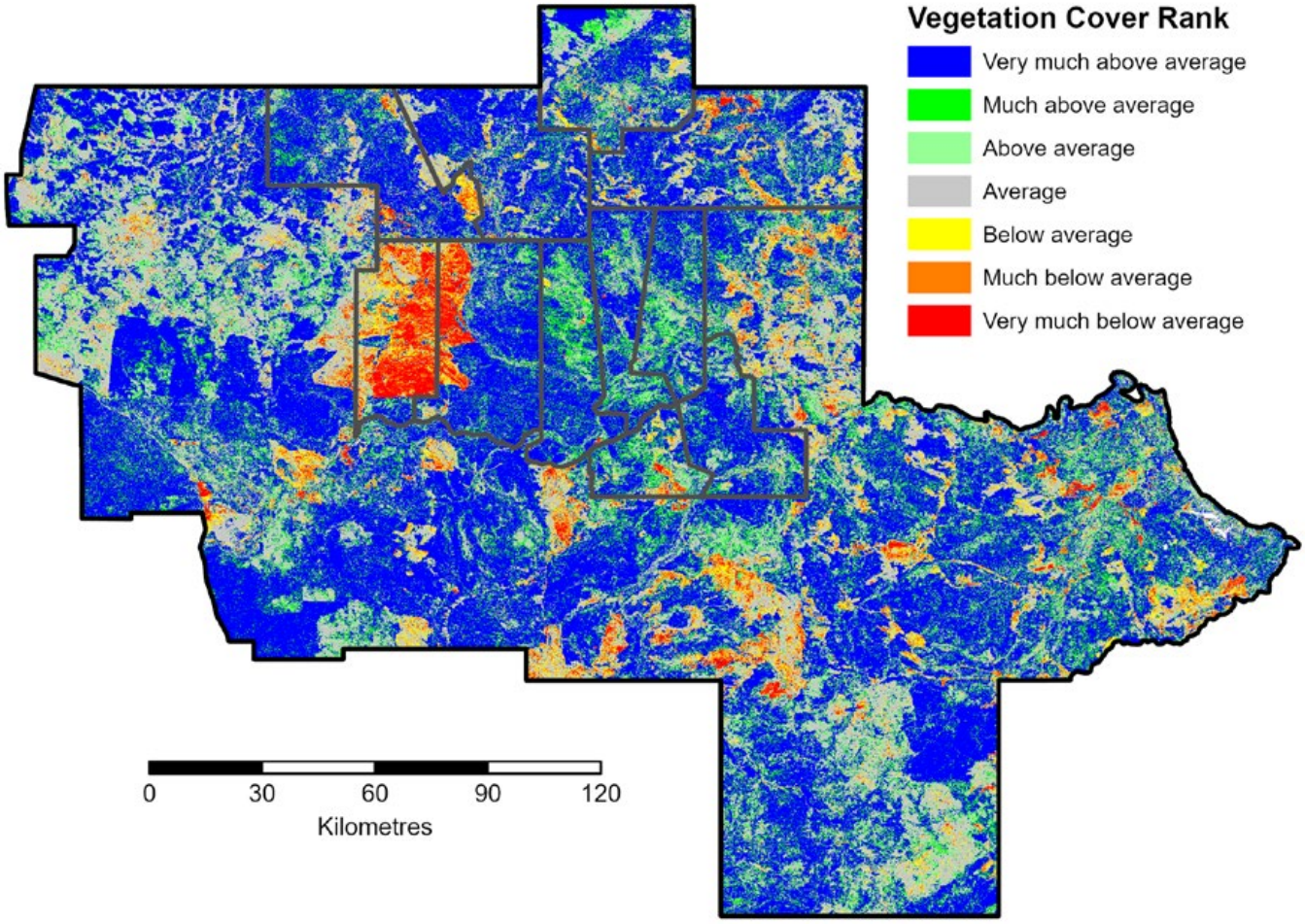


Figure 13. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Roper Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

ROPER PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

One pastoral lease in the Roper Pastoral District was visited in 2024.

Vegetation cover was measured at three sites and was generally good (Table 13). Perennial grasses dominated at one site, while annual grasses were more common at the others. Forb cover was low throughout, and litter cover was generally low to moderate.

Sites in B condition had high vegetation cover with diverse perennial (3P) grasses, low levels of undesirable grasses, forbs, and weeds, and minimal bare ground.

Two sites were in C condition, dominated by annual grasses (54%) with about 4% bare ground.

Information from individual lease land condition reports is summarised in Table 14.

Table 13. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Roper Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	-	-	-		-	-	-
B	1	19	68	13	39	22	6
C	2	4	94	3	31	54	9
D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 14. Summary of land condition assessments in the Roper Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	**B**	**A: 1**	**B: 1**	**C: 5**	**D: -**

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, a decline from B in 2017. Ground cover was generally high following above-average wet season rainfall

PASTURE: Ground cover was high, but many sites were dominated by annual grasses with limited perennial abundance, likely due to seasonal conditions and historic grazing pressure. Dominant perennial grasses included golden beard grass and kangaroo grass; dominant annuals included native couch and fire grass.

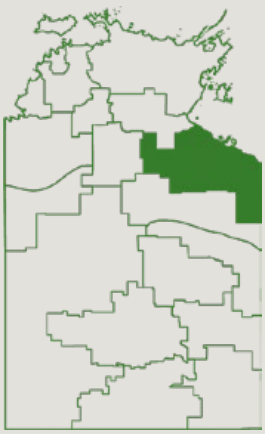
WEEDS: Hyptis was present near one monitoring site, the homestead, and around water points.

EROSION: Sheet and gully erosion occurred mainly in central areas and along drainage lines, likely exacerbated by grazing and reduced ground cover.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Minor acacia thickening was noted in the north.

GULF PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Gulf Pastoral District covers 92 000 km^2 over 16 pastoral leases.

Rainfall across the Gulf Pastoral District was in the 10th decile, reflecting extremely high rainfall amounts, with conditions classified as 'much above average' to 'very much above average' across the Pastoral District. Above average to much above average was recorded for 16% of the district with the remainder (84%) of the district being very much above average (Table 15).

The Gulf Pastoral District experienced less fire in 2024 than the previous year, approximately 32 833km^2 (35%) of the district was burnt, mostly between April and December 2024. With most of the fire activity occurring in October and November 2024 (Figure 14).

Table 15. Rainfall for the Gulf Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	1198
Long-term median (1900–2023)	661

GULF PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

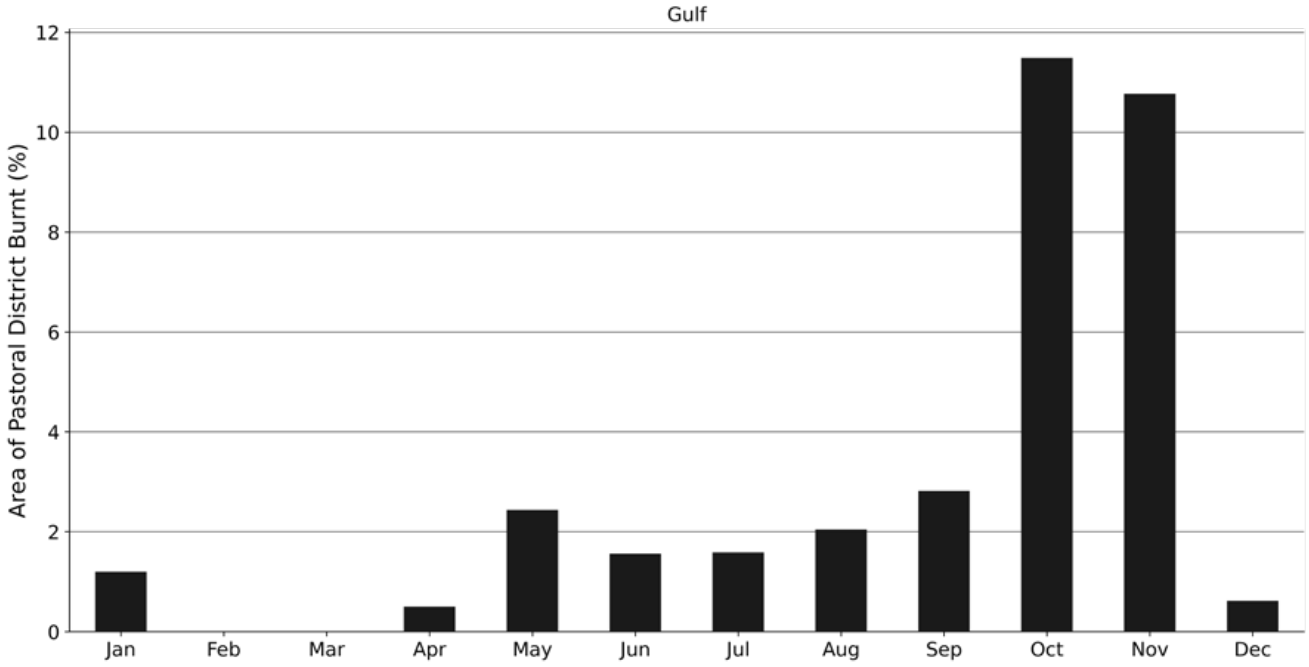


Figure 14. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Gulf Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Approximately 71% of the Gulf Pastoral District had above-average cover values, 21% recorded average, and 7% recorded below to very much below average (Figure 15). Concentrated fire activity in central and some coastal areas likely contributed to the lower cover in those regions.

GULF PASTORAL DISTRICT

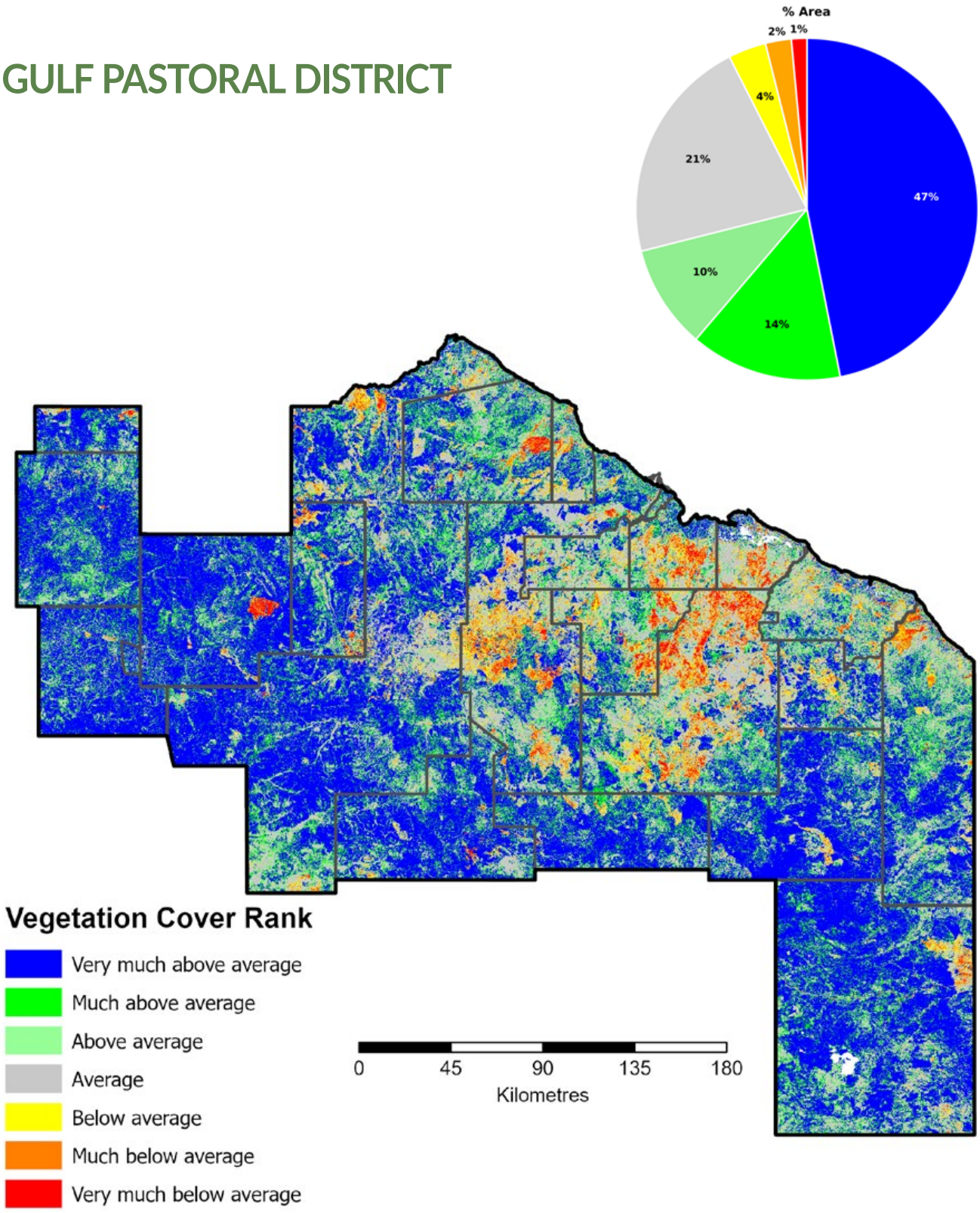


Figure 15. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2023 in the Gulf Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

GULF PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

One pastoral lease in the Gulf Pastoral District was visited in 2024.

Vegetation cover was measured at two sites, both in C condition. Despite this, cover was relatively high and dominated by perennial grasses (Table 16).

Information from individual lease land condition reports is summarised in Table 17.

Table 16. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Gulf Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	-	-	-		-	-	-
B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
C	2	11	76	14	54	22	0
D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 17. Summary of land condition assessments in the Gulf Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2023 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2021)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	C	A: –	B: –	C: 3	D: -

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2023, an improvement from C in 2021. Well above-average wet season rainfall supported abundant pasture growth across the property.

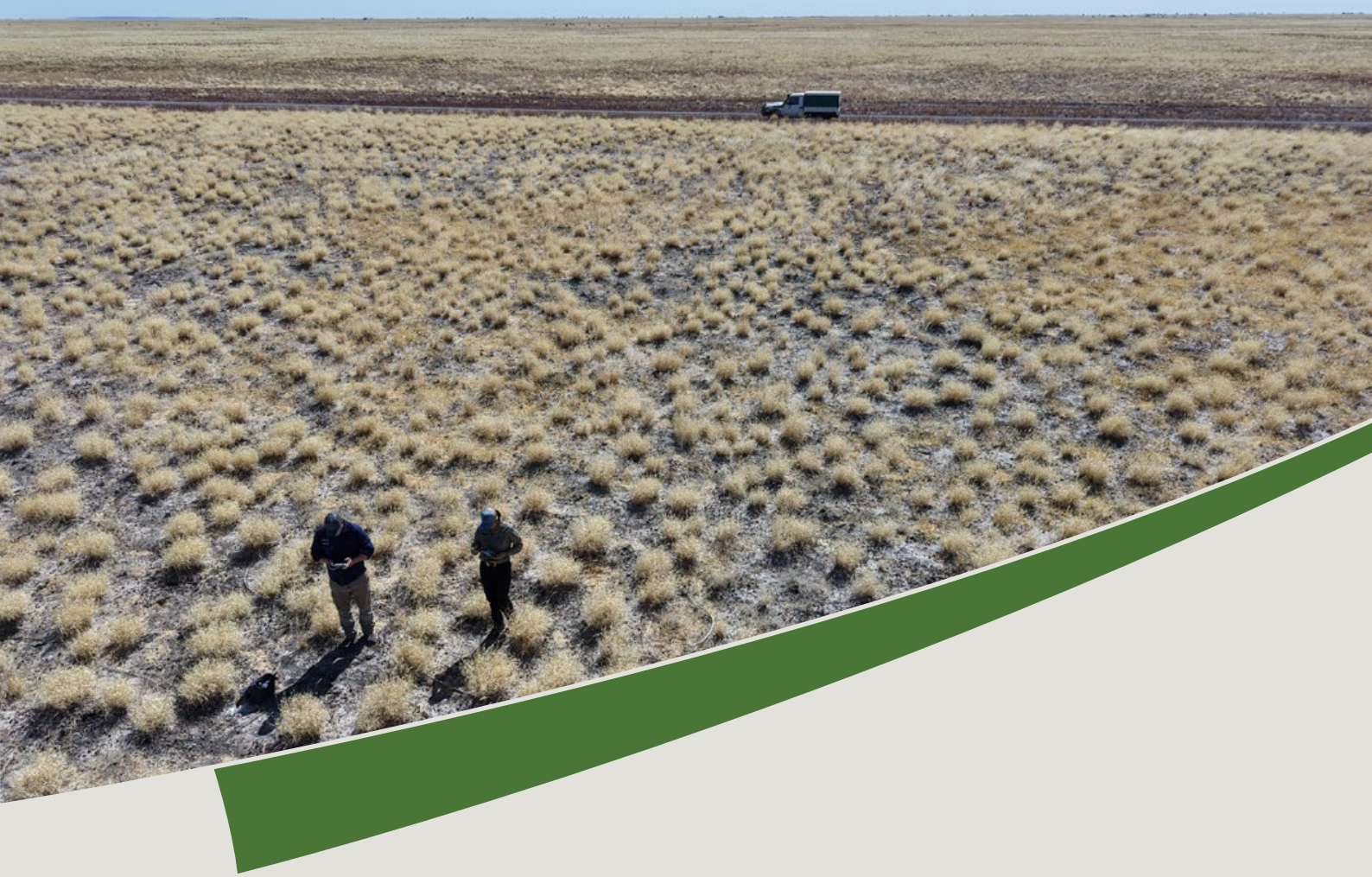
PASTURE: High pasture abundance, including 3P and intermediate perennial grasses, reflected strong seasonal rainfall. Most paddocks were in B condition, though some areas near water points showed heavy grazing. Extensive infrastructure supports good grazing management. Dominant 3P grasses included golden beard grass, plume sorghum, silky browntop, and kangaroo grass.

WEEDS: Spiny sida and hyptis were observed around water points in the north.

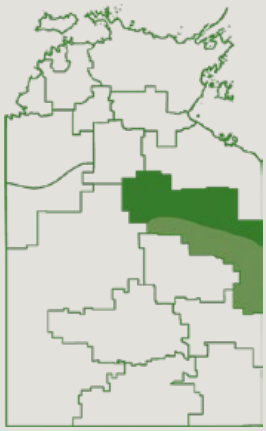
EROSION: Some erosion was seen along roads and fence lines.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was observed in some areas across the lease.



BARKLY PASTORAL DISTRICT



Barkly north
Barkly south

The Barkly Pastoral District covers 134 000 km^2 over 32 pastoral leases.

Rainfall across the Barkly was in the 10th decile, reflecting extremely high rainfall amounts, with conditions classified as 'much above average' to 'very much above average' across the Pastoral District. Generally, there is considerable north-south gradient in long-term median rainfall for the Barkly Pastoral District, rainfall is reported as sub-districts (Table 18). In 2024 81% of the Barkly received Above average to very much above average rainfall. Approximately 17% receiving Average rainfall and only 2% receiving below average to very much below average.

The fire season in the Barkly Pastoral District in 2024 was less than the previous year in terms of area burnt (Figure 16). About 24 042km2 (18%) of the district was impacted by fire, with a peak fire activity in October and November 2024 (Figure 16).

Table 18. Rainfall for the Barkly Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	Barkly North	Barkly South
2024	1035	707
Long-term median (1900–2023)	418	322

BARKLY PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

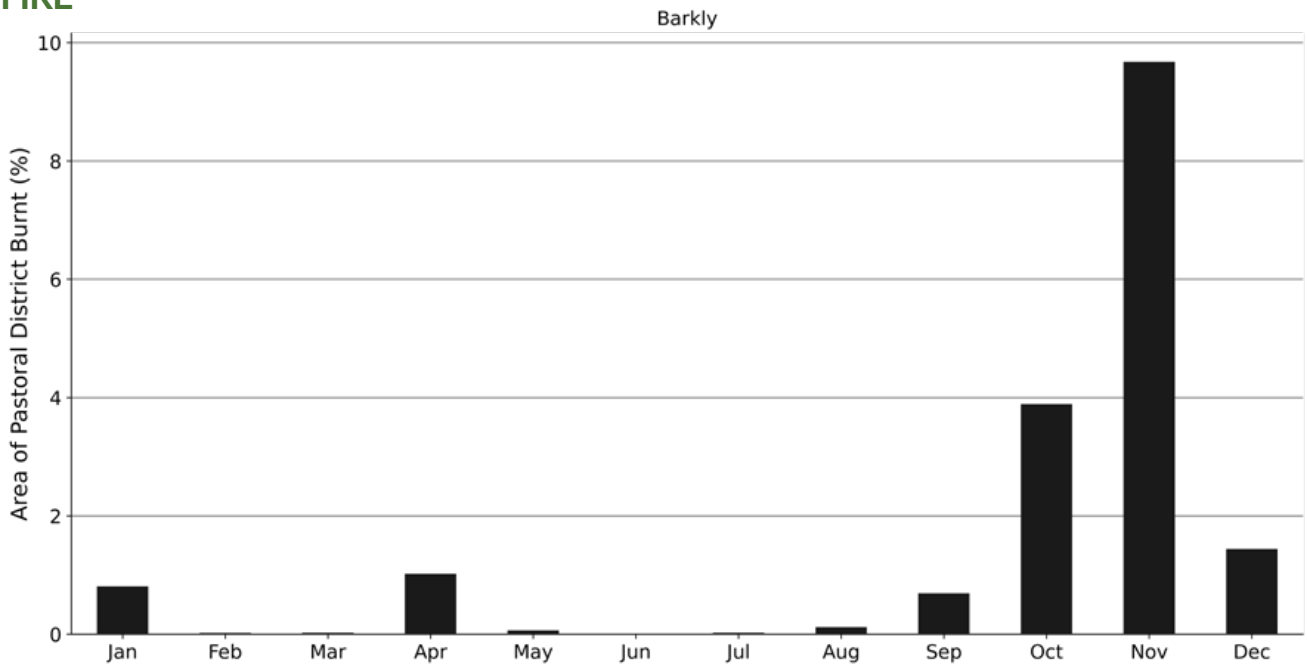


Figure 16. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Barkly Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover across the Barkly Pastoral District was variable. About 2% of the district, scattered throughout the district, had below average to very much below average vegetation cover. These areas tend to be associated with fire scars from either 2023 or 2024. 81% of the district, extend all over, had above average to very much above average vegetation cover. Average vegetation cover occurred across 17% of the district. Broadly, the pattern of vegetation growth was consistent with the high rainfall received in the district in 2024.

BARKLY PASTORAL DISTRICT

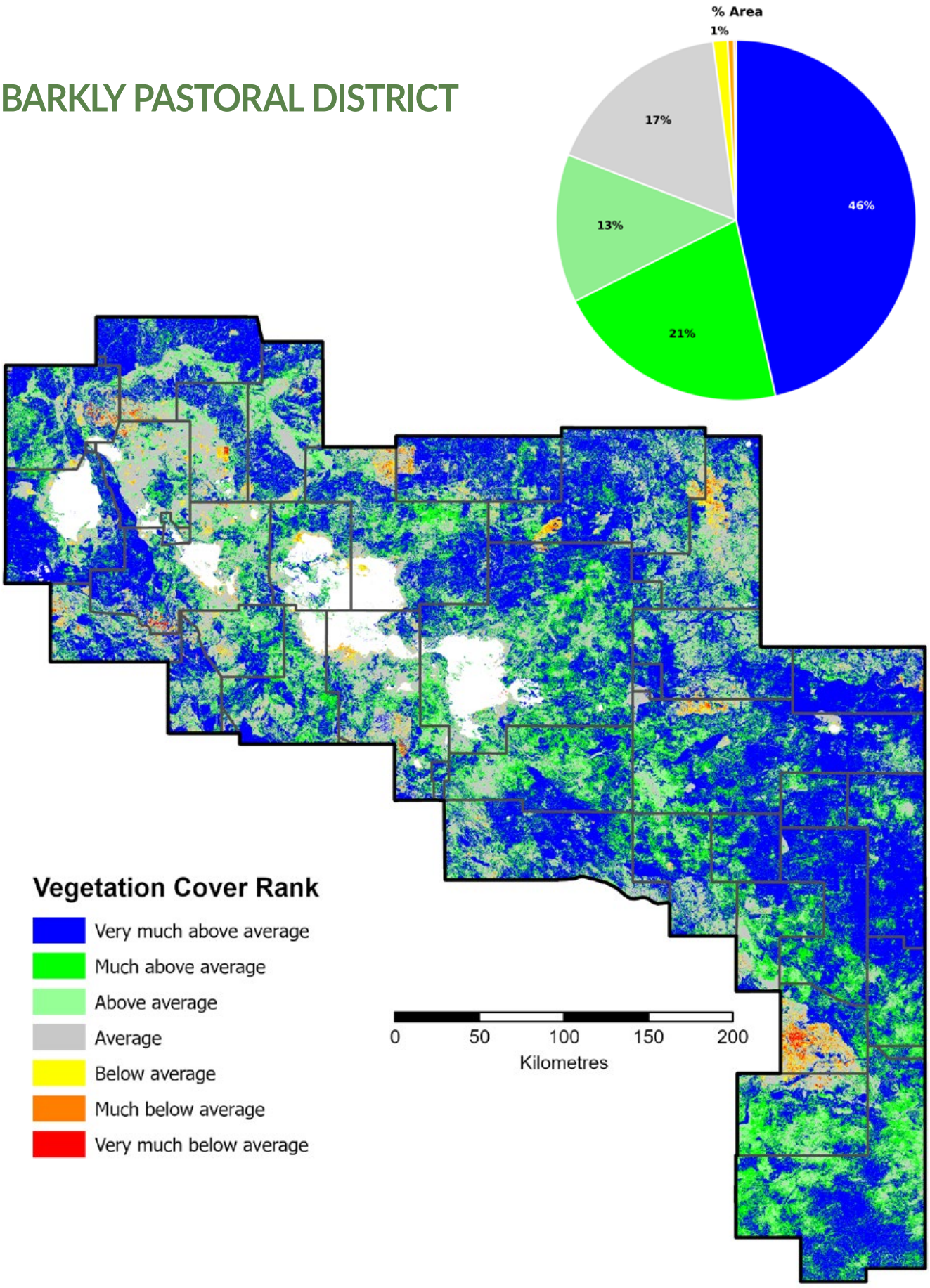


Figure 17. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Barkly Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

BARKLY PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

Four pastoral leases in the Barkly Pastoral District were visited in 2024.

Vegetation cover of the ground layer was measured at 38 monitoring sites in these leases (Table 19).

Only one integrated site was rated as being in A condition. These sites had low proportions of bare ground (0%), good vegetation cover (96%) and a diversity of perennial grasses, forbs and herbs.

Fifteen sites were rated as being in B condition. These sites had high vegetation cover (71%), low bare ground levels (9%) and a good species composition of perennial grasses (including 3P species), annual grasses, forbs and herbs.

Twenty-one sites were rated as being in C. When compared to the sites in A-B condition, these sites generally had lower coverage of perennial grasses, particularly 3P species, and an increase of less palatable perennial grasses, annual grasses, forbs and herbs.

Information from individual lease land condition reports is summarised in Table 20.

Table 19. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Barkly Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	1	0	96	3	76	16	6
B	15	9	71	21	42	22	8
C	21	9	76	15	40	25	11
D	1	15	54	31	45	1	9

Table 20. Summary of land condition assessments in the Barkly Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	**C**	**A: 1**	**B: 14**	**C: 12**	**D: 1**

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, an improvement from C in 2017. Vegetation cover, pasture biomass, and palatable species abundance were all high.

PASTURE: Higher than average rainfall in the two years before April 2024 supported significant increases in vegetation cover. Site condition was mainly differentiated by species composition, including the presence of 3P grasses and palatable annuals. Dominant 3P grasses included barley Mitchell grass, bull Mitchell grass, native millet, silky browntop, and golden beard grass.

WEEDS: Noogoora burr (class B) was found in creek lines near track crossings and around some bores.

EROSION: Moderate to severe gully erosion was seen along some roads and tracks, exacerbated by stock movement. Active management, including installation of whoa boys, was underway.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

BARKLY PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 2						
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites				
B	B	A: -	B: 6	C: 5	D: –	

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with its condition rating in 2017. Vegetation cover was moderate to high and dominated by 3P grasses

PASTURE: Cover was moderate to high, typically dominated by Mitchell grasses, with annual grasses varying across paddocks. Less-palatable perennial grasses were increasing in some areas. Dominant 3P species included barley Mitchell grass, bull Mitchell grass, and native millet.

WEEDS: One class A weed (Athel pine) was found at a bore in the central section.

EROSION: Moderate to severe gully erosion occurred mainly in the south on alluvial fans, with active gullying at several sites. Mitigation works, such as ponding banks and whoa-boys, were underway.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

Pastoral lease 3						
2023 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2021)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites				
C	D	A: 2	B: 3	C: 7	D: 1	

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2023, an improvement from D in 2021. The productive tussock grasslands, particularly in the Creswell land system.

PASTURE: Most sites responded well to above-average rainfall, with high vegetation cover and minimal bare ground. Sites in C and D condition, mainly in the eastern Creswell and Joanundah land systems, were dominated by increaser species. Sites in A and B condition, mostly in central and western areas, had abundant 3P grasses. Dominant 3P species included Queensland bluegrass, silky browntop, native millet, and broad-leaf ribbon grass.

WEEDS: Prickly acacia (class A) was found at three locations along tracks; parkinsonia (class B) was mostly near bores.

EROSION: No erosion was observed during the inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: Feral pigs were observed near water points, such as near tanks and troughs in the northeastern part of the lease.

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was recorded at a monitoring site in the central section of the lease.

BARKLY PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 4					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2021)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: -	B: 3	C: 6	D: 2

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its 2021 rating. Much above-average wet season rainfall supported good pasture growth and increased perennial cover, including 3P species.

PASTURE: High vegetation cover and low bare ground were observed across all sites. Most areas were clay grasslands or alluvial floodplains, with condition influenced by remaining 3P grass cover. Many paddocks had a high abundance of increaser species such as Fleming's bush and annual sorghum, reflecting past heavy grazing. Dominant 3P grasses included barley Mitchell grass, hoop Mitchell grass, native millet, silky browntop, and golden beard grass.

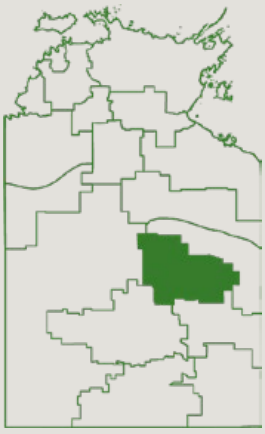
WEEDS: Mesquite (class A) and parkinsonia (class B) were found, mainly around disturbed areas and water points.

EROSION: No significant erosion was observed during the inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Soap bush thickening was seen in some areas.

TENNANT CREEK PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Tennant Creek Pastoral District covers 69 200 km^2 over eight pastoral leases.

Rainfall across the Tennant Creek Pastoral District was in the 10th decile, reflecting extremely high rainfall amounts, with conditions classified as 'much above average' to 'very much above average' across the Pastoral District. 75% of the district receiving above average to very much above average rainfall. 22% of the district received average rainfall with approximately 3% of the district receiving below average to very much below average rainfall. Rainfall looked to be concentrated in the northern section of the region with the southern sections receiving lees overall rainfall (figure 2) (Table 21).

The Tennant Creek Pastoral District had a much less extensive fire season in 2024 compared to 2023, with 20 883km2 (30%) of the district burnt compared to the 80 6474.1km2 (48%) of the district burnt in the previous year. Fires were active in most months, however fire activity peaked in October and continued through to December 2024. In 2023 fire activity was concentrated in the northeast and in 2024, in the south west (Figure 18).

Table 21. Rainfall for the Tennant Creek Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	669
Long-term median (1900–2023)	288

TENNANT CREEK PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

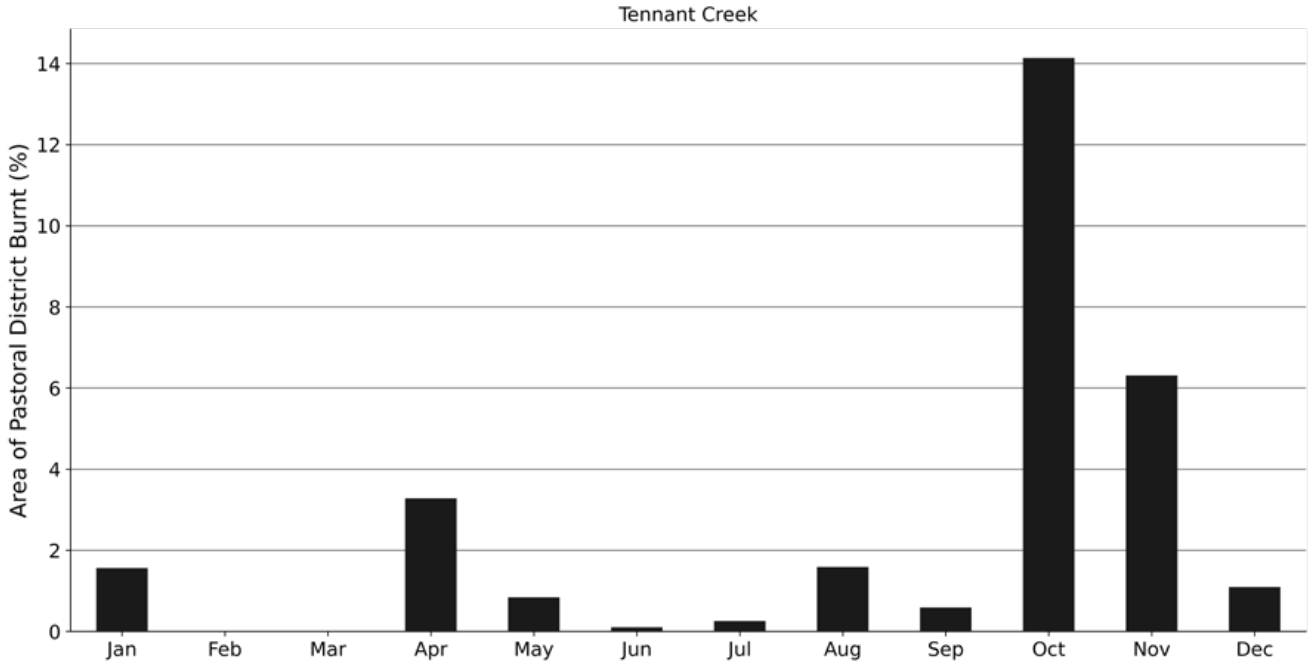


Figure 18. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover levels in the Tennant Creek District were very much above average across half (50%) of the district. About a quarter of the district (in the northeastern section) had average to very much below average vegetation cover these areas and generally follow the fire scars from 2023 fires. Areas in the south follow fire scars from 2024 fire activity.

No pastoral leases were assessed in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District in 2024.

TENNANT CREEK PASTORAL DISTRICT

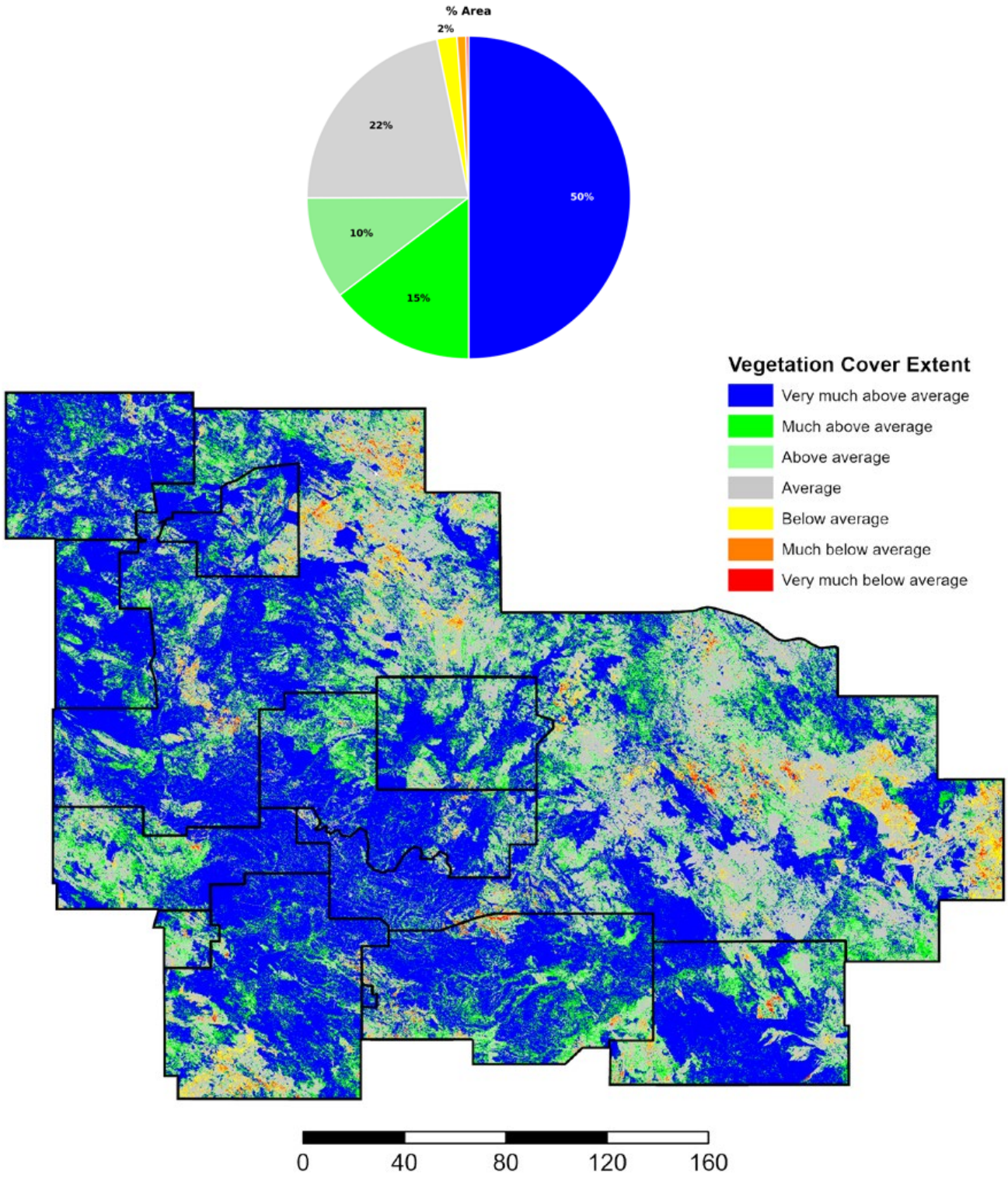
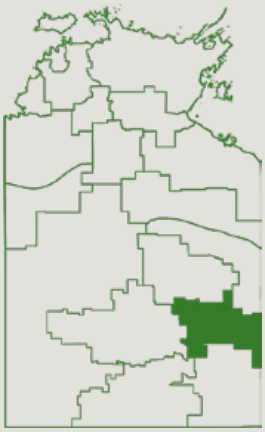


Figure 19. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of area of each vegetation cover rank.

PLENTY PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Plenty Pastoral District covers 52 242 km² over 14 pastoral leases.

Rainfall in 2024 was within the 9th decile, indicating 'much above average' conditions, corresponding to the 80th to 90th percentile of historical records. About 90% of the district received above average to much above average rainfall, with the remainder receiving average rainfall (Table 22).

The fire season was minimal compared to other districts, with only 665 km² (1% of the district) affected. Fires occurred in January, October, and November 2024 (Figure 19).

Table 22. Rainfall for the Plenty Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	331
Long-term median (1900–2023)	202

PLENTY PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

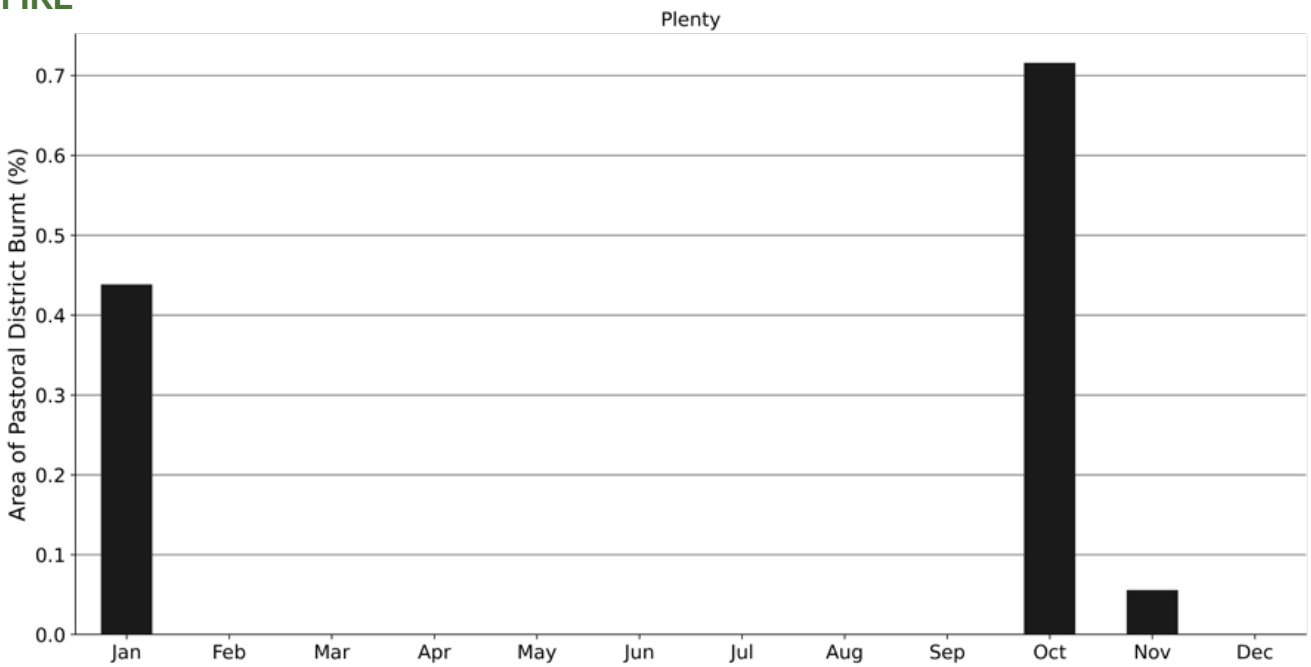


Figure 19. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Plenty Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Most of the Plenty Pastoral District had above average vegetation cover in 2024 (Figure 20). Similar to 2023, 63% of the district, mainly in the north and northwest, had above to very much above average cover. Average vegetation cover occurred in pockets throughout the district, mostly in the south and east, covering about 35% of the area. Well below to very much below average cover occurred in isolated pockets, mostly in the south, affecting around 2% of the district.

PLENTY PASTORAL DISTRICT

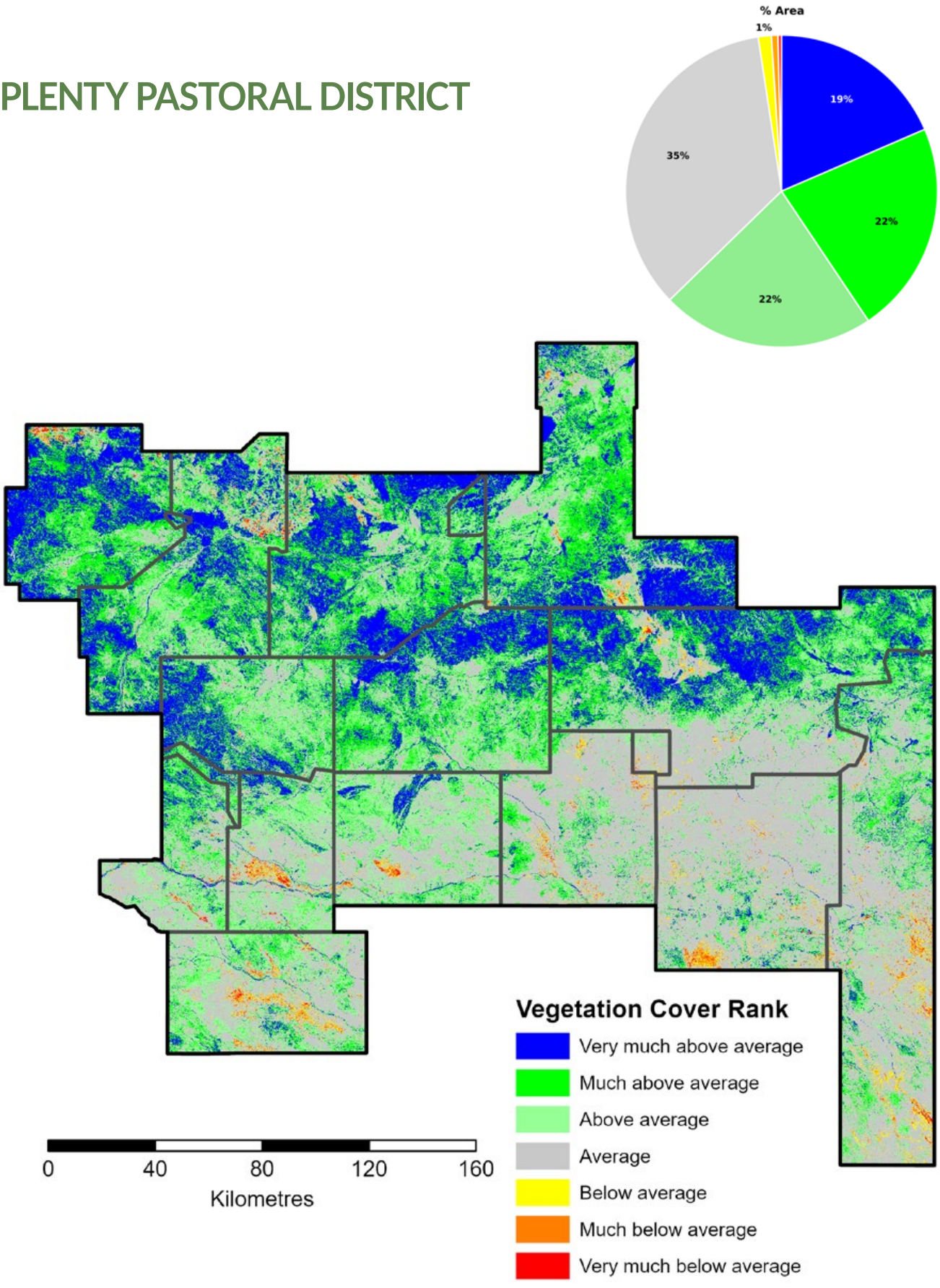


Figure 20. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Plenty Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of area of each vegetation cover rank.

PLENTY PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

Two pastoral leases in the Plenty Pastoral District were visited in 2024.

Vegetation cover was measured at 18 monitoring sites on these leases (Table 23). Two sites, both on the same property, were assessed as A condition. These had low bare ground, high overall vegetation cover, an average of 29% perennial grass cover, and a mix of annual grasses, forbs, and herbs.

Most monitored sites were in B or C condition, with average vegetation cover of 51% and 46% respectively. Sites in D condition generally had high bare ground and low perennial grass cover.

Information from individual lease land condition reports is summarised in Table 24.

Table 23. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Plenty Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	2	11	56	34	29	17	10
B	7	17	57	25	18	29	11
C	7	24	55	21	33	15	7
D	2	39	36	25	27	5	4

PLENTY PASTORAL DISTRICT

Table 24. Summary of land condition assessments in the Plenty Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	B	A: 2	B: 6	C: 3	D: -

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with its 2017 rating. Bare ground had increased slightly, and ground cover had decreased marginally

PASTURE: Most areas responded well to favourable conditions from extended La Niña years (2020–2022), though some showed weaker recovery likely due to local rainfall variation and grazing impacts. Pasture was mostly annual grasses with lower-than-expected perennial abundance. Dominant perennial species included silky browntop, oat kangaroo grass, buffel grass, native millet, and cotton panic grass.

WEEDS: Significant patches of mimosa were present along watercourses in the north.

EROSION: Active mild to severe erosion was seen across the lease, including a large riverine area requiring ongoing management.

FERAL ANIMALS: Signs of camels (scats) and feral horses (grazing woody shrub cover) were observed.

WOODY THICKENING: Emu bush thickening was noted in the north.

Pastoral lease 2					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2017)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	D	A: –	B: 5	C: 7	D: 3

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, an improvement from D in 2017. Ground cover had increased, and bare ground decreased, largely driven by annual grasses. The lack of internal fencing, especially in the more productive southeast, hinders effective grazing management.

PASTURE: Increased ground cover was mainly due to annual grasses, with some contribution from forbs and lower-value perennials. Few sites naturally support 3P species, and overall perennial abundance was lower than expected given recent rainfall. Moderate to high bare ground remained in parts of the south and east. Dominant perennial grasses included golden beard grass, buffel grass, barley Mitchell grass, and curly windmill grass.

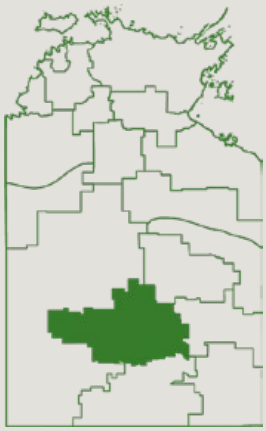
WEEDS: No weeds were observed during the inspection.

EROSION: Active erosion was noted in several areas, including severely eroded disused tracks in the north. Repairs have been delayed due to late summer rain.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection

WOODY THICKENING: Woody thickening was not observed during the inspection.

NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District covers 103 000 km² over 29 pastoral leases.

Rainfall across the district in 2024 was within the 9th decile, indicating 'much above average' conditions. This corresponds to the 80th to 90th percentile of historical records and highlights significantly wetter-than-normal conditions across much of the district (Table 25). In 2024, 87% of the region received much above average to very much above average rainfall, 11% received above average rainfall, and the remaining 2% received average rainfall.

The fire season was relatively light, with approximately 3% (3071 km²) of the district burnt. Most fires occurred in January and October 2024 (Figure 21).

Table 25. Rainfall for the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	455
Long-term median (1900-2023)	260

NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

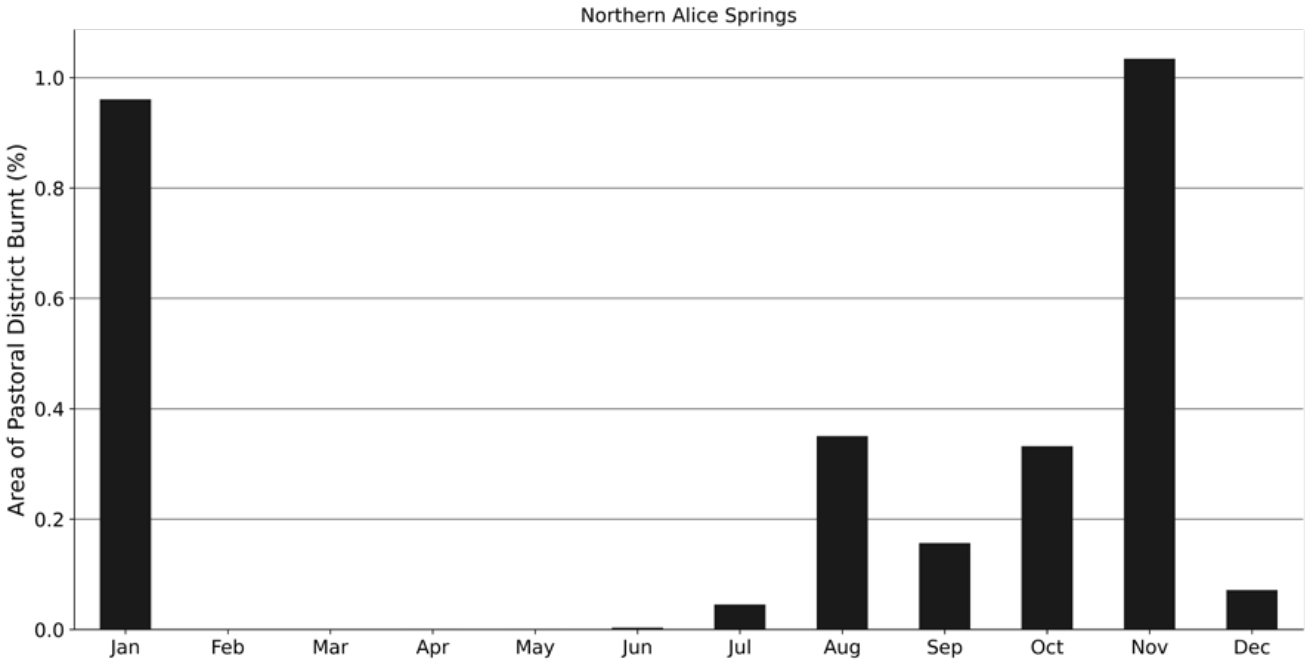


Figure 21. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Vegetation cover was very much above average across 38% of the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District in 2024 (Figure 22). Approximately 23% of the district had much above average cover, 15% had above average cover, and 18% had average cover. The remaining 6% of the district had below average to very much below average vegetation cover. The overall above average cover reflects the very much above average rainfall received across much of the district.

NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

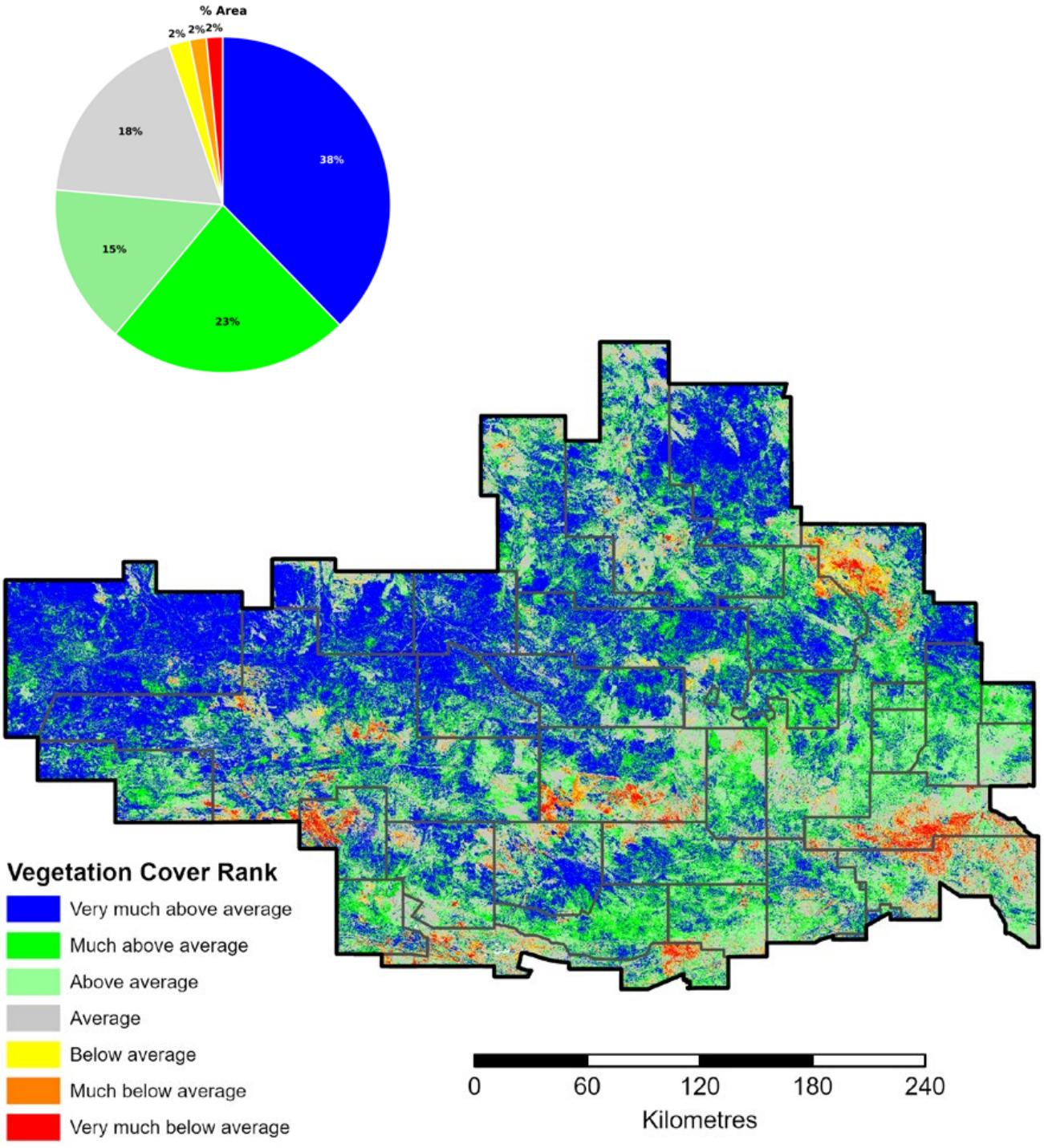


Figure 22. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2023 in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of the area of each vegetation cover rank.

NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

Five pastoral leases in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District were visited in 2024.

Vegetation cover was measured at 39 sites on these leases (Table 26). Two sites, both on the same property, were assessed as A condition. These sites had an average of 35% perennial grass cover, along with a mix of annual grasses, forbs, and herbs.

The majority of monitored sites were in B or C condition, with average vegetation cover of 46% and 43% respectively, and contained a mix of perennial and annual grasses as well as forbs and herbs.

One site was assessed as D condition, with particularly high bare ground (82%) and very low perennial grass cover (1%).

Information from individual lease land condition reports is summarised in Table 27.

Table 26. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	2	16	59	25	35	11	15
B	18	26	46	28	22	12	12
C	18	31	43	26	18	15	11
D	1	82	10	8	1	4	5

Table 27. Summary of land condition assessment in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2018)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: –	B: 5	C: 5	D: –

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its 2018 rating and improved from D in 2014. Bare ground has decreased and ground vegetation increased.

PASTURE: Ground cover improved, largely driven by annual grasses responding to recent La Niña conditions and local rainfall. Perennial grasses, including some 3P species, showed signs of regeneration. Overall pasture was mostly hayed-off, with ground cover levels varying across land systems due to differences in soil fertility, rainfall, and grazing pressure. Dominant 3P species included barley Mitchell grass and buffel grass.

WEEDS: No weeds were observed during the inspection.

EROSION: Active and stable erosion was present, mainly along old tracks, with new tracks often formed alongside. Windsheeting and scalding continued in some rocky and calcareous areas.

FERAL ANIMALS:No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 2

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2018)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: -	B: 1	C: 4	D: -

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its 2018 and 2014 ratings. Bare ground had decreased, and ground vegetation increased in response to favourable conditions during recent La Niña years.

PASTURE: Ground cover increased since 2018, mainly due to palatable annual species like bunched kerosene grass, with limited perennial regeneration. Most pastures had hayed off at the time of inspection. The dominance of annuals suggests grazing pressure and past land use continue to limit perennial recovery. 3P grasses persisted mainly in sheltered areas. Dominant 3P species included buffel grass, native millet, silky browntop, and barley Mitchell grass.

WEEDS: No weeds were observed during inspection.

EROSION: Active erosion was present, including cattle-impacted waterways and eroded tracks.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during inspection

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during inspection.

Pastoral lease 3

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2019)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	FAIR/POOR	A: 3	B: 4	C: 3	D: -

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, an improvement from Fair–Poor in 2019. The property has responded well to good rainfall and reduced grazing pressure.

PASTURE: Vegetation cover increased from 15% in 2019 to 50% in 2024, with bare ground reduced from 54% to 24%. Palatable perennial grasses increased across all sites, though cover varied due to land system differences, rainfall, and grazing. Dominant 3P grasses included barley Mitchell grass, native millet, Queensland bluegrass, bandicoot grass, and cotton panic grass.

WEEDS: Hairyflower love grass was observed near roads and the homestead; though not declared, it has low palatability and potential to spread. No declared weeds were found during this visit.

EROSION: Low levels of gully erosion were observed, mostly in alluvial floodplains, with mitigation measures in place.

FERAL ANIMALS: One feral cat was observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Minor turkey bush thickening noted in parts of the Bushy Park land system; requires monitoring.

NORTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 4

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2018)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	C	A: –	B: 7	C: 2	D: 1

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, improving from C in 2018. The property has responded well to good rainfall from 2020 to 2024, with reduced bare ground and strong pasture recovery.

PASTURE: Bare ground decreased from 37% in 2018 to 29% in 2024. Pasture diversity and cover have improved, particularly in the south and near floodplains, supported by extended good rainfall and management. Dominant 3P grasses included bandicoot grass, native millet, buffel grass, curly windmill grass, desert bluegrass, Queensland bluegrass, and kangaroo grass.

WEEDS: Rubber bush (class B) was present in flood-outs.

EROSION: Some active erosion around floodplains and near infrastructure, particularly roads and watering points.

FERAL ANIMALS: Donkeys and horses are being managed at stable numbers to help manage fuel loads and vegetation. Cats and wild dogs are present and subject to baiting.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during inspection.

Pastoral lease 5

2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2019)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	D	A: -	B: 4	C: 7	D: 2

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, an improvement from D in 2019. The property has responded well to good rainfall from 2021 to 2024.

PASTURE: Vegetation cover increased from 12% in 2019 to 43% in 2024, with bare ground decreasing from 65% to 30%. B condition sites improved mainly due to rainfall, while erosion and historic grazing limited recovery at C sites. Pastures have generally recovered well, including areas affected by the 2023 bushfires. Dominant 3P grasses included bandicoot grass, cotton panic grass, native millet, and buffel grassWEEDS: No weeds were observed during inspection.

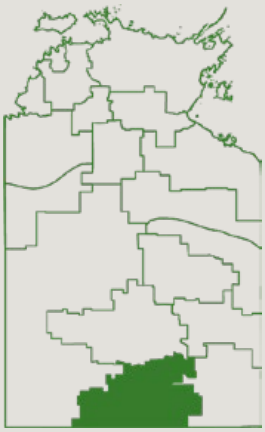
WEEDS: No weeds were observed during inspection.

EROSION: Erosion has historically been a problem. Gully erosion was common in central areas and sheet erosion in the north.

FERAL ANIMALS: Minimal horse presence in the east; one feral cat observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: Turkey bush thickening in some areas.

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT



The Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District covers 92 500 km^2 over 25 pastoral leases.

Rainfall in 2024 was recorded in the 7th decile, corresponding to 'above average' conditions. This places rainfall totals between the 60th and 70th percentiles, indicating moderately higher-than-normal rainfall (Table 28). About 77% of the district recorded average rainfall, 19% recorded above average rainfall, and the remaining 4% experienced much above average to very much above average rainfall.

The fire season was much less extensive than the previous year, with fires occurring mostly in January 2024 (Figure 23). Approximately 566 km² (1%) of the district was impacted by fire.

Table 28. Rainfall for the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

Rainfall (mm)	
2024	201
Long-term median (1900–2023)	167

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

FIRE

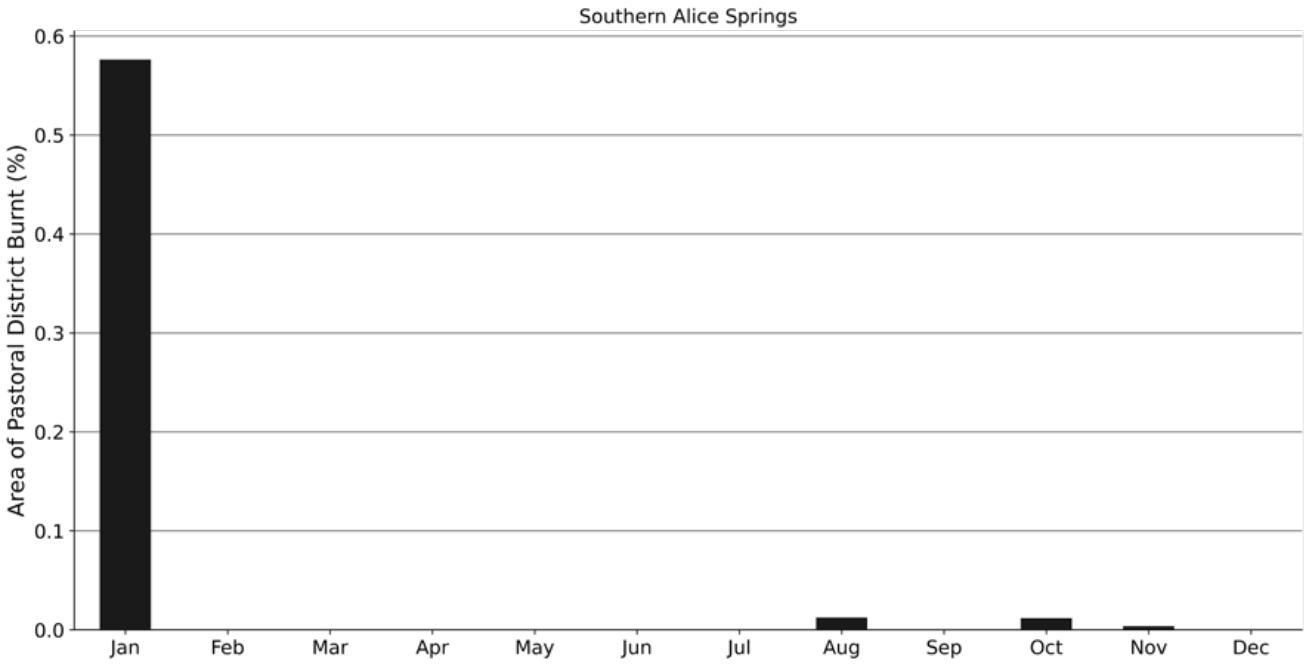


Figure 23. Percentage of the area burnt each month in 2024 in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

TOTAL VEGETATION COVER AND BARE GROUND DYNAMICS

Approximately 5% of the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District had very much above average vegetation cover in 2024 (Figure 24), correlating with above average rainfall in those areas (Figure 2). Above average to much above average vegetation cover was recorded in 23% of the district, while 56% had average cover. The remaining 16% of the district had below average to very much below average cover.

Vegetation cover generally increased in the northern section and southwest corner of the district. Average pasture growth was widespread, becoming more prominent in the southeast. Larger bands of very much below average pasture cover generally correspond to 2023 and 2024 fire scars.

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

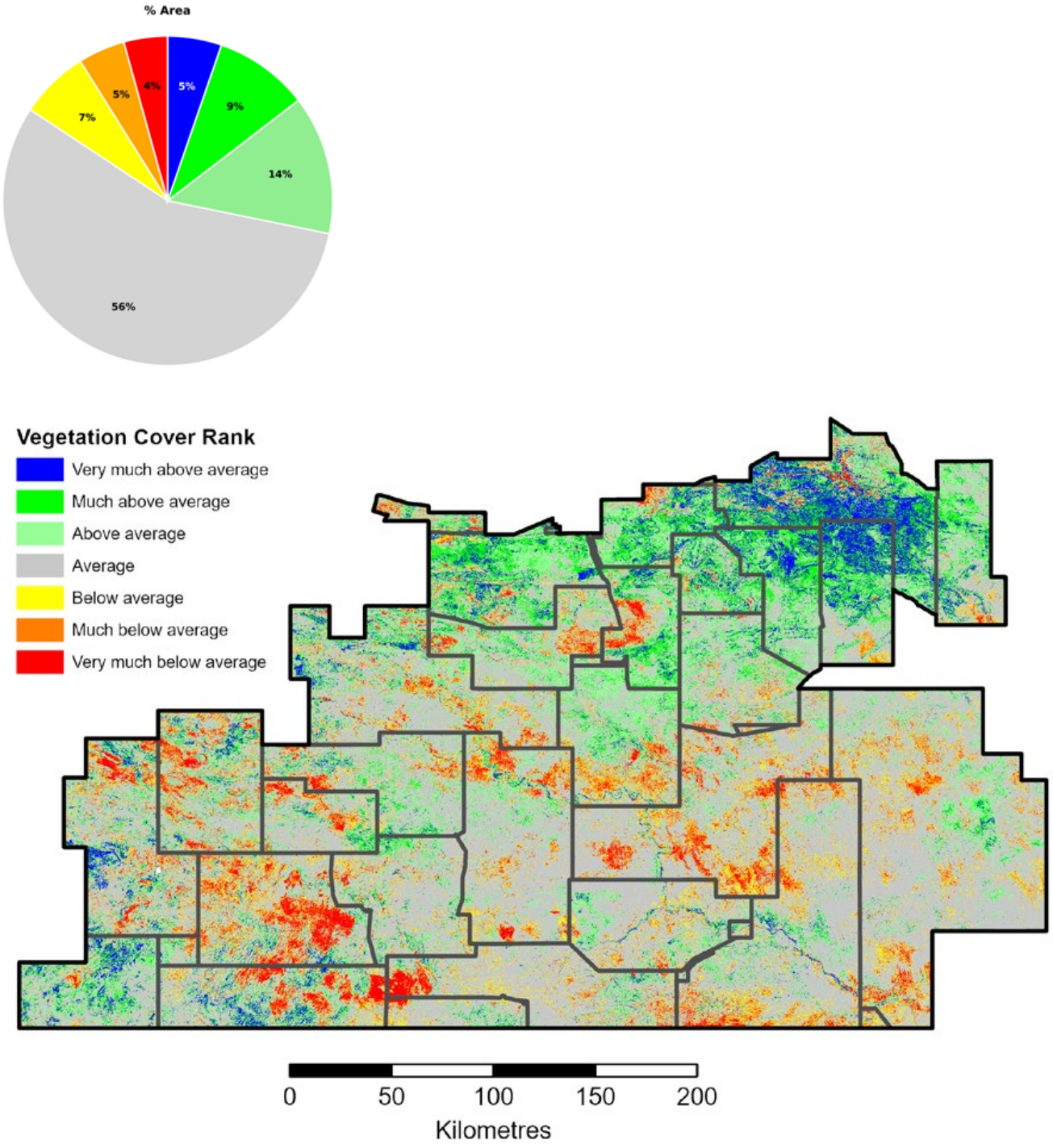


Figure 24. Rank of the amount of remotely-sensed vegetation cover present in late 2024 in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District against previous years back to 1988. Pie chart shows the percentage of area of each vegetation cover rank.

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

SITE-BASED MONITORING

Four pastoral leases in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District were visited in 2024. Vegetation cover was measured at 35 sites on these leases (Table 29). No sites were rated in A condition.

Fourteen sites were assessed as B condition, with all leases having at least two sites in this category. These sites had an average vegetation cover of 37%, with perennial grasses averaging 20%.

Most sites were in C or D condition, with bare ground averaging 40% and 57% respectively. Perennial grass cover was low, averaging 12% at C sites and 3% at D sites, with overall vegetation cover averaging 32% and 27% respectively.

Information from individual lease land condition reports is summarised in Table 30.

Table 29. Summary of average values of key variables at monitoring sites for each land condition score in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

Land condition	No. of sites	Bare ground (%)	Veg cover (%)	Litter cover (%)	Perennial grass cover (%)	Annual grass cover (%)	Forb & herb cover (%)
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	14	30	37	33	20	13	4
C	11	40	28	32	12	12	4
D	10	57	16	27	3	4	8

Table 30. Summary of land condition assessment in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District.

Pastoral lease 1					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2019)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
D	D	A: -	B: 3	C: 1	D: 10

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in D condition in 2024, consistent with its 2019 rating. The lease showed minimal response to recent above-average rainfall.

PASTURE: Land condition continued to decline, with only marginal recovery since 2019 despite high rainfall from 2021 to 2023. Bare ground remained high across most of the property, especially in eastern areas. Some parts provided limited hayed-off fodder. Dominant 3P grass included buffel grass.

WEEDS: Athel pine (class B) was present in the main river channel.

EROSION: Severe active erosion was widespread, especially around tracks and tributaries of the Finke River, with extensive gullying and topsoil loss worsened by grazing and stock movement.

FERAL ANIMALS: High numbers of feral horses in the southeast.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 2					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2018)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
B	B	A: –	B: 7	C: 3	D: 1

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in B condition in 2024, consistent with its 2018 rating. The property responded well to good rainfall from 2021 to 2024.

PASTURE: Ground cover increased from 18% in 2018 to 32% in 2024, with bare ground reduced from 57% to 41%. B sites were mainly influenced by rainfall, while C and D sites reflected limited productivity and erosion impacts. Moderate to high bare ground persisted in many areas, with 3P grasses mainly under tree canopies, suggesting grazing pressure or reduced seedbanks. Dominant 3P grasses included buffel grass, cotton panic grass, bandicoot grass, finger panic grass, and curly windmill grass.

WEEDS: No weeds were observed during the inspection.

EROSION: Active erosion occurred across several areas, including monitoring sites and along old tracks prone to gully and rill erosion. No mitigation works were evident.

FERAL ANIMALS: One camel was observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

Pastoral lease 3					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2018)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	B	A: –	B: 2	C: 5	D: -

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, a decline from B in 2018. Low vegetation response to below-average rainfall and grazing pressure, especially in the southeast, contributed to higher bare ground levels.

PASTURE: Vegetation cover decreased by 6–50% at most sites since 2018, with corresponding increases in bare ground. Only one site improved. Beyond measured sites, moderate to high bare ground persisted, especially in the east. Most pastures were dominated by hayed-off annual grasses, with low perennial presence mainly under trees, indicating grazing pressure. Recent fire activity also affected some areas. Dominant 3P grasses included bandicoot grass and cotton panic grass.

WEEDS: No weeds were observed during inspection.

EROSION: No erosion was observed during inspection.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

SOUTHERN ALICE SPRINGS PASTORAL DISTRICT

Pastoral lease 4					
2024 land condition	Land condition at last inspection (2018)	Land condition rating of monitoring sites			
C	C	A: –	B: 3	C: 4	D: 3

GENERAL COMMENTS: The pastoral lease was assessed as being in C condition in 2024, consistent with its 2018 rating. Some areas responded well to favourable conditions from 2020–2023, while others showed limited recovery.

PASTURE: Ground cover and litter slightly increased since 2018, with corresponding decreases in bare ground. Responses varied across the lease due to land system differences, rainfall, and grazing pressure. Moderate to high bare ground persisted, especially in the south. Pastures were dominated by annual grasses with limited perennial presence, mainly under trees. In open areas, perennials were sparse or heavily grazed. Dominant 3P grasses included cotton panic grass and bandicoot grass.

WEEDS: Athel pine (class A) was observed.

EROSION: Active erosion in multiple areas, especially near the southwest boundary and along tracks, with severe gullies and high ongoing risk.

FERAL ANIMALS: No feral animals were observed during the inspection.

WOODY THICKENING: No woody thickening was observed during the inspection.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

The Board held seven meetings between 1 January and 31 December 2024. At each meeting, it considered standing items on the status of pastoral applications, correspondence and general functions of the Board.

The Board made the following decisions at its meetings in 2024:

MEETING 158 – 5 JANUARY 2024

- No decison

MEETING 152 – 14 MARCH 2023

- Allan Andrews appointed as Deputy Chairperson
- Finalised Pastoral Land Board Terms of Reference.
- Approved Pastoral Land Clearing Guidelines (v10.2).
- Endorsed Non-pastoral Use Guidelines (v3.2).

MEETING 160 – 19 & 20 MARCH 2024

- Approved the Douglas South development plan.
- Issued clearing permit PLC24/02 (**Providence**).
- Published Gazette on permitted clearing for Carpentaria Highway Upgrades gravel pits at Kalala, Shenandoah and Tanumbirini pastoral leases.

MEETING 161 – 14 MAY 2024

- Issued clearing permit PLC24/03 (**Dalmore Downs**).
- Issued clearing permit PLC24/04 (**Auvergne**).
- Recommended conversion of Douglas West lease to perpetual term.

MEETING 162 – 18 JUNE 2024

- Visited the Katherine Cotton Gin.
- Appointed and revoked authorised officers under the *Pastoral Land Act 1992*.
- Issued clearing permit PLC24/05 (**Bloodwood Downs**).

MEETING 163 – 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

- Issued variation clearing permit PLC22/01B (**Gilnockie**).
- Notified relevant parties of investigation into illegal land clearing at Dungowan.
- Deferred consideration of Dungowan clearing permit pending investigation outcomes.

MEETING 164 – 29 & 30 OCTOBER 2024

- Published 2025 meeting dates, Pastoral Lease Monitoring Schedule, and Pastoral Land Board Instrument of Delegations.
- Submitted feedback on Territory Coordinator Draft Bill.
- Issued 12 land condition notices under the Pastoral Land Board Compliance Framework.
- Approved Pastoral Land Clearing Guidelines (v10.3).
- Appointed and revoked authorised officers under the Pastoral Land Act 1992.
- Requested additional information for Newry clearing application.
- Recommended conversion of Mary River West lease to perpetual term.
- Continued investigation notices on Dungowan illegal clearing.

MEETING 165 – 10 DECEMBER 2024

- Issued clearing permit PLC24/08 (**Scott Creek**).

PERMITS ISSUED

LAND CLEARING

Clearing permits issued in 2024:

Lease	Purpose	Area (ha)	Permit
Scott Creek	Pastoral purposes	905.2	PLC24/08
Bloodwood Downs	Pastoral purposes	568.85	PLC24/05
Auvergne	Pastoral purposes	750.7	PLC24/04
Dalmore Downs	Pastoral purposes	46.15	PLC24/03
Providence	Pastoral purposes	3494.03	PLC24/02
Gilnockie	Pastoral purposes	NA	PLC22/01B

NON-PASTORAL USE

There were no applications for non-pastoral use presented to or considered by the Board in 2024.

PASTORAL
LAND BOARD
NORTHERN TERRITORY

GPO Box 3000, DARWIN, NT 0801
daf.nt.gov.au/boards-and-committees/pastoral-land-board