



Northern
Territory
Government

Pastoral Land Board



Annual Report
2006/07



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Chairman's Foreword

The Annual Report of the Pastoral Land Board for 2006/07 covers the period 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007 in line with a seasonal reporting period approved by the Minister in May 2005.

The Northern Territory pastoral estate is about 606,000 km² in size. The gross value of production for the NT cattle industry was estimated at \$213 million in 2006, which represents 45% of the total value of the Territory's rural industries and fisheries production.

One of the important functions of the Pastoral Land Board is to monitor the condition and use of pastoral land to facilitate its sustainable use and the economic viability of the industry in accordance with the objects of the *Pastoral Land Act*. The Board is committed to the maintenance of the condition of the Territory's pastoral land and, where possible, its improvement.

Based on analysis of the Tier 1 monitoring data and basic Landscape Function Analysis (LFA) the Darwin, Katherine, Roper, Victoria River, Sturt Plateau, Gulf, Barkly, and Northern Alice Springs pastoral districts are considered to be stable. Tennant Creek pastoral district is considered to be relatively stable, whereas the Plenty and Southern Alice Springs pastoral districts are declining in condition. This decline is mainly attributed to a follow on effect of the last few seasons with drought and low rainfall continuing in parts of the district in 2006/07.

The Board thanks its Executive Officer, Ms Judy Bartolo, and officers of the Natural Resources Division, Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport who have given the Board invaluable support, assistance and advice. In particular the Board acknowledges the role of staff within the Rangelands Management Branch who are responsible for the continued operation and implementation of the pastoral land monitoring programs.

During the 2006/07 reporting period, membership terms expired for Jim Forwood and John Childs. Jim Forwood served on the Board for 15 years until June 2007. He was a member of the inaugural Board established in June 1992 and was appointed to the position of Chairman in June 2002. John Childs was a member of the Board from June 2001 until June 2007. The Board thanks Jim and John for their conscientious work on the Pastoral Land Board and acknowledges their fine contributions to the sustainable management of the Territory's pastoral estate.



Anthony Young
Chairman
Pastoral Land Board
21 May 2009

Membership of the Board

Chairman

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| James Bower Forwood | 3 year term - expiring 25 June 2007 |
| Anthony David Young | Appointed 26 June 2007 for 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2010 |

Members

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| John Reginald Childs | 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2007 |
| Colleen Marie Costello | 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2008 |
| Steven Craig | 3 year term – 25 June 2008 |
| Thomas George Henry Stockwell | 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2008 |
| Michael Francis Quirk | Appointed 26 June 2007 for 3 year term – expiring 25 June 2010 |

Executive Officer

Judy Bartolo

Functions of the Board

Section 29 of the *Pastoral Land Act* outlines the functions 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;
- [j] to make recommendations to the Minister on any matter relating to the administration of the Act;
- [k] to hear and determine all questions, and consider and make recommendations on all matters, referred to it by the Minister; and
- [m] such other functions as are imposed on it by or under the *Pastoral Land Act* or any other Act or as directed by the Minister.

Other functions outlined in the Act include:

- i. to determine applications for clearing pastoral land [section 38(1)(h)]
- ii. to consider breaches of conditions referred by the Minister [section 41]
- iii. to consider and make recommendations to the Minister on applications for conversion of term pastoral leases to perpetual tenure [section 62]
- iv. to administer the access provisions of the Act, including nomination of access routes under PART 6
- v. to determine applications for non pastoral use of pastoral land [PART 7].

Meetings of the Board held during 2006/07

Four meetings of the Pastoral Land Board were held during 2006/07. In addition to these meetings, eight matters were determined out of session and one application was considered by a sub-committee of the Board including a property inspection and meeting with the pastoral lessee. In conjunction with a Board meeting in Alice Springs, the Board undertook a regional field trip visiting eight properties.

70th Meeting: teleconference held on 9 November 2006

The Board determined three applications to clear pastoral land, a non pastoral use application and gave further consideration to an application to convert a term lease to perpetual tenure and its recommendation to the Minister.

71st Meeting: teleconference held on 11 December 2006

The Board considered two applications to clear pastoral land. One application was deferred and the Board requested amendments to the clearing plan. The other application was approved. The Board also determined two applications for non pastoral use.

72nd Meeting: held in Alice Springs on 23 March 2007

The Board determined three applications to clear pastoral land and two applications for non pastoral use. Briefings to the Board included presentations on the Central Australia Grazing Land Management Workshops, the Australian Collaborative Rangeland Information System (ACRIS) an update on the Pastoral Land Monitoring Programs and integration of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 programs. The Board also discussed managing the risk of stocking pressure on pastoral land and recommended that an information package should be sent to all incoming lessees outlining their obligations under the *Pastoral Land Act* and the monitoring programs.

73rd Meeting: teleconference held on 22 June 2007

The Board gave preliminary consideration to an application to convert a term lease to perpetual tenure, determined two clearing applications and one application for non pastoral use. This was the last meeting of the Board for Chairman Jim Forwood and Board member John Childs before the end of their terms which expired on 25 June, 2007.

Alice Springs regional field trip March 2007

The Board undertook a regional field trip to central Australia in March 2007. Purpose of the field trip included:

- a property inspection of a trial horticulture development (citrus and stone fruits) which was subject to a non pastoral use application;
- visits to 5 properties south of Alice Springs experiencing prolonged drought conditions;
- visit to a property north of Alice Springs to view experimental sites. This property had received above average rainfall for several years; and
- visit to a property east of Alice Springs which had received record rainfall after 5 years of low rainfall.

Issues raised during the property visits and discussions with pastoral lessees included:

- horticulture development on pastoral leases;
- drought policy and the Exceptional Circumstances program;
- Athel pine and its spread into tributaries of the Finke and into clay country where it had never established in the past;
- Condition of pastoral access roads, lack of maintenance on government controlled roads, areas of extensive erosion following recent rain, and poor maintenance techniques leading to gully erosion and roads being turned into creek beds;
- Impact of feral camels. Pastoral properties adjoining desert country had been severely impacted by large numbers of camels moving onto pastoral land including significant damage to property infrastructure and grazing of pasture response following rain and denuding of mulga trees at grazing height.

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- Impact of dingoes and wild dogs. Pastoral lessees reported increasing numbers of wild dogs and increased stock losses presumably because of drought conditions.
- Drought management. Five properties south of Alice Springs had experienced prolonged drought conditions, with one property in its 4th year of drought. Cattle numbers on these properties had been significantly reduced.
- One property north of Alice Springs raised woody weed and mulga thickening as a management issue and the lack of support for research on the use of fire as a control method.



Photo 1: Horticulture trial (citrus and stone fruits) south of Alice Springs, March 2007.



Photo 2: View from Mulga Park Road 20 March, 2007. Area had been impacted by thousands of camels in February 2007.

The overall impression of Board members was that while there were significant areas of bare ground on pastoral land south of Alice Springs which had experienced prolonged periods of drought, the landscape and soil surface was largely intact. Where there had been some rain, there had been good germination and subsequent ground cover, although this had dried off in areas where follow up rain had not been received producing little yield. The most noticeable land degradation issue observed by the Board was erosion and subsequent soil loss associated with public roads throughout the district.

Policy Issues and New Initiatives

Moratorium on Land Clearing in the Daly Region

No applications to clear pastoral land within the 'Daly Region' were lodged during 2006/07.

Review of the Pastoral Land Act

A review of the *Pastoral Land Act* commenced in July 2004 with the release of a discussion paper. A total of 24 submissions were lodged in response to this discussion paper. A Key Issues paper was issued in December 2004 which summarised issues raised during the consultation period. A Steering Committee was then established which included members of the Pastoral Land Board and relevant departmental officers to oversee the review process. A recommendation paper was prepared by the Steering Committee in May 2006 and released to stakeholders who had lodged submissions to the Key Issues paper. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on the recommendation paper during 2006/07.

Guidelines for use of Introduced Pastures in Pastoral Lease Development

During 2005/06 the Board developed draft guidelines for the use of introduced pasture species in pastoral lease development. Further development and implementation of the guidelines was deferred pending review of the *Pastoral Land Act* and possible legislative amendments. No further progress was made during 2006/07.

Information Package provided to incoming Pastoral Lessees

Arising from Board discussions on managing the risk of stocking pressure on pastoral land, it was agreed that information provided to an incoming lessee was an important tool in influencing their future management of the property. The Board recommended to the Rangelands Management Branch, Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport that an information package be sent to all incoming lessees outlining their obligations for sustainable management, the requirements of the *Pastoral Land Act* and the pastoral monitoring programs. The Branch introduced this initiative in June, 2007. Following purchase of a property, an information package is sent to lessees including information on land condition, the Tier 1 monitoring program, lessee responsibilities under the Pastoral Land Act and requirements of other legislation.

Pastoral Land Monitoring Programs

The Pastoral Land Board, the pastoral industry and the Northern Territory government are working together to maintain or improve the condition of the Territory's pastoral land. This land, held as pastoral leases, comprises around 45% of the Territory. Maintenance of this natural resource in good condition is essential for a profitable and sustainable pastoral industry.

Monitoring and reporting on the condition of pastoral land is a key function of the Pastoral Land Board under the *Pastoral Land Act*. The Board is also responsible for instigating remedial action to restore pastoral land condition. In support of the Board, the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport (NRETAS) operates a two-tiered pastoral land monitoring system. Both tiers of the monitoring program aim to assist pastoralists in making better management decisions.

The Tier 1 program uses photos and visual assessment of photo-point sites to assess pastoral land condition and changes in condition over time. Pastoralists are encouraged to use the photo-point sites to become more aware of pasture plants and the level of pasture use by stock. This in turn will help them better manage their livestock and land.

Tier 2 programs are designed to provide an objective assessment of pastoral land condition using remote sensing and ground-based assessment methods. Currently, only a small percentage of pastoral land is monitored and updated annually using Landsat satellite data. A project to develop a monitoring program across the whole of the NT using MODIS to provide annual updates of land condition commenced in March 2007.

Establishment and Reassessment of Tier 1 Photo-Point Monitoring Sites

The Tier 1 monitoring program commenced in 1993. By 30 September 2007, a total of 2,259 Tier 1 photo-point monitoring sites had been established on 226 properties, which includes 83 monitoring sites on 13 properties held under other tenure such as Crown leases and Aboriginal land. Of this total, 2,210 sites are considered to be active, with monitoring data routinely collected under the monitoring program. Generally, at least one site is located in each paddock on a preferred grazing land system. These sites provide a bench mark for pastoralists to assess pasture changes over time.

During 2006/07 a total of 673 monitoring sites were reassessed on 74 properties and 20 new monitoring sites were established, including sites established on two Aboriginal Land Trust properties, one in the Darwin Pastoral District, and one in the Gulf Pastoral District (refer Table 1).

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| Pastoral District | Total No. of Sites | No. of Properties [with Tier 1 sites] | Average Sites/Property | New Sites Established 2006/07 | Reassessed 2006/07 | |
|--|--------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| | | | | | Sites | Properties |
| Darwin 21 Pastoral Leases | 144 | 21 | 7 | 0 | 57 | 9 |
| Katherine 7 Pastoral Leases | 49 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 28 | 5 |
| Roper 10 Pastoral Leases | 51 | 10 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| VRD 25 Pastoral Leases | 338 | 25 | 13 | 0 | 97 | 8 |
| Sturt Plateau 27 Pastoral Leases | 180 | 26 | 7 | 4 | 29 | 8 |
| Gulf 18 Pastoral Leases | 112 | 17 | 7 | 0 | 18 | 5 |
| Barkly 31 Pastoral Leases | 447 | 31 | 14 | 2 | 214 | 16 |
| Tennant Creek 8 Pastoral Leases | 80 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Plenty 14 Pastoral Leases | 157 | 14 | 11 | 0 | 50 | 5 |
| Northern Alice Springs 30 Pastoral Leases | 340 | 30 | 11 | 6 | 69 | 6 |
| Southern Alice Springs 26 Pastoral Leases | 278 | 24 | 11 | 3 | 111 | 12 |
| Other Tenure All Pastoral Districts Aboriginal Land and Crown Leases | 83 | 13 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 2259 | 226 | 10 | 20 | 673 | 74 |

Table 1: Tier 1 Photo-point Monitoring Sites established and reassessed 2006/07 (1 October 2006 – 30 September 2007)

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General Definition of Land Condition

A general definition of landscape condition is provided by the Commonwealth Land and Water Audit (2001) “as a value judgement related to the worth of a landscape for a particular use”. In the Northern Territory, where maintaining natural pastures is a primary goal of sustainable pastoral management, landscape condition is most usefully defined in terms of the ability of the land to maintain productivity for future generations. Land condition in the Northern Territory pastoral estate can best be described by three main indicators:

- The distribution of water and nutrients in a landscape often scarce in these essential components, which in turn affects,
- The productivity and composition of pasture plant species, and
- The presence of feral animals and noxious weeds.

Criteria used to assess Pasture Condition

Three condition classes are used to assess pasture condition (good, fair and poor). These classes are based on indicators of pasture condition such as the abundance of perennial plants known to increase or decrease following grazing, and ground surface indicators such as the exposure of bare soil to wind and water and its subsequent erosion. These indicators of pasture condition and associated assessment criteria have largely been determined from historical information, local knowledge, cross fence comparisons and stock grazing gradients out from water. The further from water the less intense the stock grazing pressure and the higher the condition class rating tends to be.

The condition classes can be described as follows:

Good: There is close to maximum diversity and cover of annual and perennial plant species possible for that pasture type with perennial species of various ages. There is no active erosion other than natural features and processes. Plant and litter cover protects the soil from wind and water in all seasons except following fire.

Pastures in good condition are stable and at or close to their productive potential. Pastoral managers should be aiming for good pasture condition, which necessitates careful management practices that maintain or improve pasture condition.

Fair: Reduced cover and regeneration of palatable perennial species and there has been some establishment of less preferred unpalatable plants. Productivity remains high in good seasons but is markedly reduced in dry seasons. Lower plant cover increases the susceptibility of soil to erosion in most seasons and there is evidence of moderate erosion on susceptible land types.

Pastures in fair condition are productive, but below their productive potential. They are sometimes actively eroding and can rapidly deteriorate to poor condition. Maintaining pastures in fair condition is not a satisfactory status quo, as long term damage to their productive capacity will result. They should be managed with the aim of improving condition and ultimately achieving good condition status.

Poor: The palatable component of the pasture is depleted and the pasture is dominated by annual, ephemeral and unpalatable perennial species. There is no, or markedly reduced, regeneration of desirable perennial plants, productivity is impaired and the seasonal response is poor. Soils are unstable and susceptible to erosion in all seasons and past erosion leaves the site susceptible to further soil movement if grazed.

Pastures in poor condition have severely reduced productivity, which is often especially telling during dry periods. They require a very long period of spelling to improve condition or mechanical intervention such as erosion control earthworks or reseeding may be required.

Change in Landscape Function (LF) Index

Assessing change in landscape function (landscape ‘health’) over time can assist in understanding if natural processes or grazing management practices are impacting upon pastoral district or individual station condition. Landscape function describes the capacity of landscapes to regulate (i.e. capture and retain, not leak) rainwater and nutrients, the vital resources for plant growth (Ludwig et al. 1997).

Functional landscapes have a good cover and arrangement of persistent vegetation patches (typically perennial vegetation) such that much of the rainfall is retained and is able to infiltrate the soil, and as there is little runoff, there is limited movement of sediment and loss of entrained nutrients, organic matter (litter) and seeds. Similarly, the good cover and arrangement of vegetation patches minimises wind erosion and loss of nutrients in dust. As patch cover decreases and patches become more distant, runoff increases resulting in lower infiltration and increased nutrient loss in transported sediments (i.e. erosion). These eroding landscapes become progressively more dysfunctional, i.e. have reduced landscape function. The composition of species contributing to pasture biomass (dry weight basis) is estimated at Tier 1 sites. Estimates are adjusted for any grazing that has occurred. The percentage area of bare ground is also estimated so that % ground cover can be calculated as 100 - % bare ground. These two data types have been combined to produce an index of landscape function, therefore potential ‘health’ of the pastoral districts.

The Richards-Green Functionality Index (RGFI) is a procedure for deriving an index of landscape functionality from data collected at monitoring sites, in the absence of more robust data collected through formal landscape function analysis. The index is based on vegetation and soil attributes that, in combination, contribute to increased retention of rainwater and nutrients as resources for the growth and persistence of plants. These attributes include perennial grass density, vegetation cover and soil surface conditions favourable to water infiltration and retention, nutrient cycling and surface soil stability.

Modifications to the RGFI were made in this analysis because the composition of herbage species by biomass is estimated at Tier 1 sites rather than species frequency.

Estimated ground cover has been weighted by the proportion of perennial grasses present (i.e. cover comprised of a high proportion of perennial grasses is assumed to contribute more to improved landscape function than a site with an equivalent cover of annual or ephemeral species).

Darwin Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Darwin Pastoral District is stable.

| Rainfall Darwin District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 1329 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 1324 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 1246 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 1269 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 83 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 55 mm |

Rainfall in the Darwin District for 2006/07 was just below the 20 year average rainfall. A dry start to the wet season was experienced in the Darwin District, and the build up period was drier than usual, consistent with El Nino influences.

During the “build up” night time temperatures were cooler than average, but during the day the District experienced less than typical shower and thunderstorm activity resulting in fewer cool days. The monsoon established in January 2007 and there were a couple of significant rainfall events that resulted in the wet season total rainfall being slightly above long term averages. Temperatures were cooler than average during the dry season.

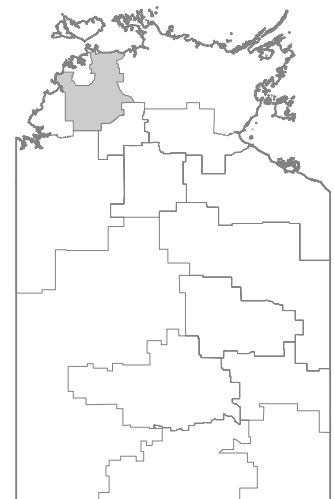


Figure 1: Location of Darwin Pastoral District

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Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on ten properties in the Darwin Pastoral District during 2006/07, 57 sites were re-assessed and 3 new monitoring sites were established on a property held under Aboriginal Freehold title which is used for pastoral purposes. Land condition on the properties reassessed has generally remained stable with a slight increase in the number of sites considered as poor condition.

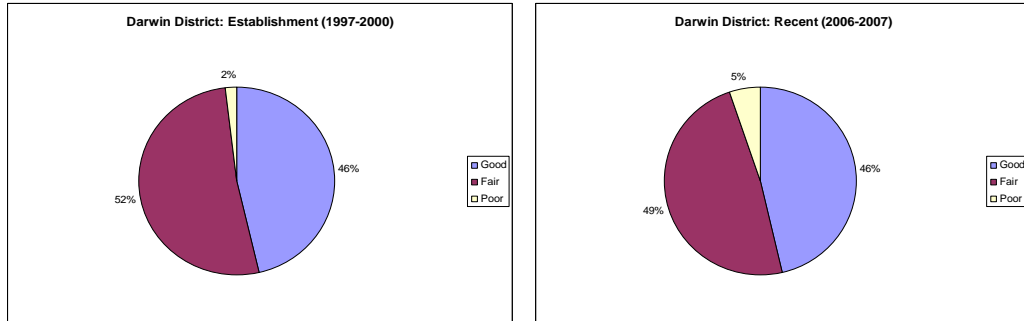


Figure 2: Darwin Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment in 1997-2000 derived from 54 sites compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same 54 sites.

A comparison of sites between establishment and the most recent round of assessments, indicates generally stable land condition with minimal overall change (Figure 2). A slight increase in the number of sites listed as poor condition at the expense of sites listed as good condition is mostly due to *Mimosa pigra* encroachment into some floodplain monitoring sites.

The Landscape Function (LF) index calculated for the Darwin Pastoral District provides indications of change in perennial biomass and cover between site establishment (initial) and recent reassessments (Figure 3). The comparisons between initial and recent assessments indicate very minimal change in perennial species biomass and cover between establishment in 1997 and 2006/07 reassessment, confirming that land condition in the Darwin District remains in stable condition. Note that only 20 sites were compared as not all reassessed sites had the required recorded data for Landscape Function Analysis.

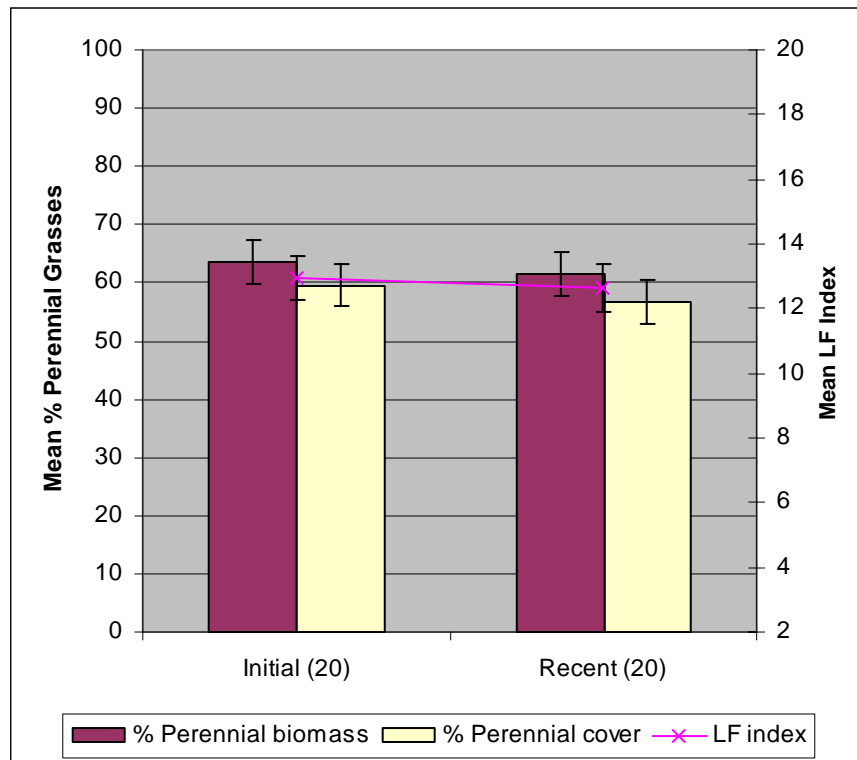


Figure 3: Darwin Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/07 reassessments.

Katherine Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Katherine Pastoral District is stable.

| Rainfall Katherine District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 1097 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 986 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 1051 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 944 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 46 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 42 mm |

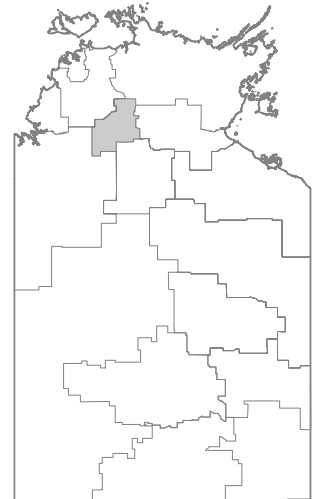


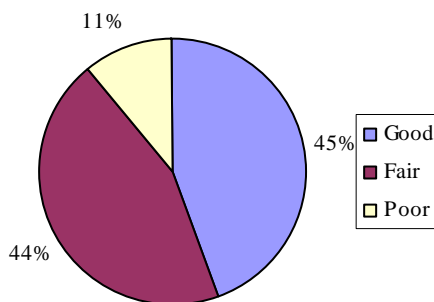
Figure 4: Location of Katherine Pastoral District

Overall the Katherine Pastoral District had below average rainfall for 2006/07. The best rainfall occurred in the Nitmiluk National Park region in the north eastern section of the Pastoral District.

The Katherine Pastoral District comprises a small number of pastoral properties in comparison to other Pastoral Districts. Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on five properties during 2006/07, predominantly located in the western portion of the district. Not all sites could be reassessed due to poor maintenance of access tracks. Ground and middle story data was not collected on 9 sites as they had been burnt in the months preceding reassessment and fire had removed all litter and scorched the perennial tussocks within the sites.

A comparison of site condition between establishment in 1993 and the 2006/2007 reassessment depicts a significant improvement in land condition (Figure 5).

Katherine District: Establishment (1993)



Katherine District: Recent (2006/07)

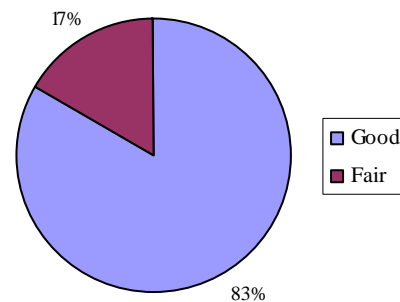


Figure 5: Katherine Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment in 1993 derived from 18 sites compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same 18 sites.

Sites assessed as being in good condition have increased significantly with 83% of sites now rated as good condition. The percentage of sites rated as fair condition has also increased and during the 2006/07 reporting period no sites were assessed as being in poor condition (compared to 11% at establishment). The improvement in land condition in the Katherine District is generally attributed to a combination of seasonal conditions and improved land management practices during recent years resulting in an increased abundance of perennial grass species.

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Landscape Function (LF) index comparisons between initial establishment (1993) and recent reassessment (2006/07) site data for the Katherine Pastoral District indicate that landscape function is stable, with an improvement of perennial biomass and cover. (Figure 6).

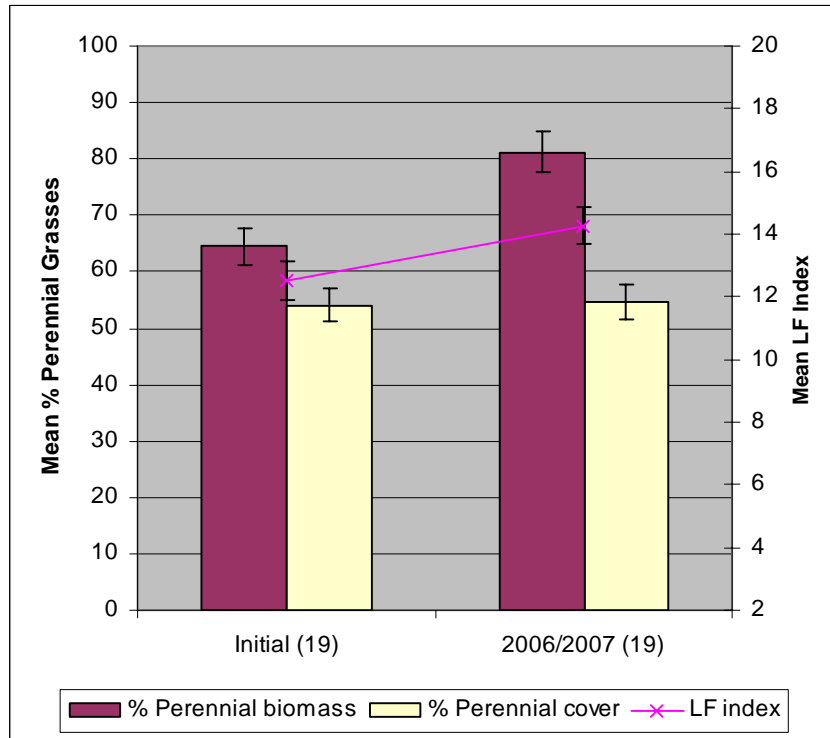


Figure 6: Katherine Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/07 reassessments.

Roper Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Roper Pastoral District is improving.

| Rainfall Roper District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 920 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 746 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 881 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 688 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 39 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 58 mm |

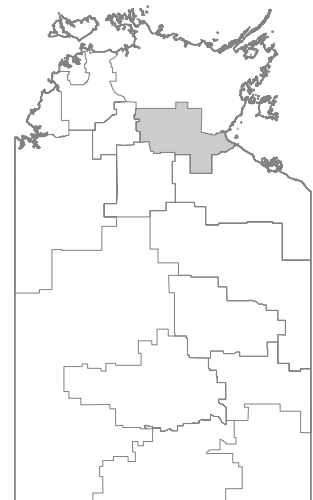


Figure 7: Location of Roper Pastoral District

Rainfall for 2006/07 was below the 20 year district average. Highest rainfall was recorded along the coastal Roper River mouth and properties in the north-east of the district.

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Tier 1 data collection was not undertaken in the Roper Pastoral District during 2006/07. An assessment of sites suitable for LF Index analysis from site establishment to 2004/05 is presented in Figure 8. Comparison between the initial assessment and the most recent assessments in 2004/05 shows an increase in perennial species biomass and cover, indicating improving land condition within the Roper Pastoral District.

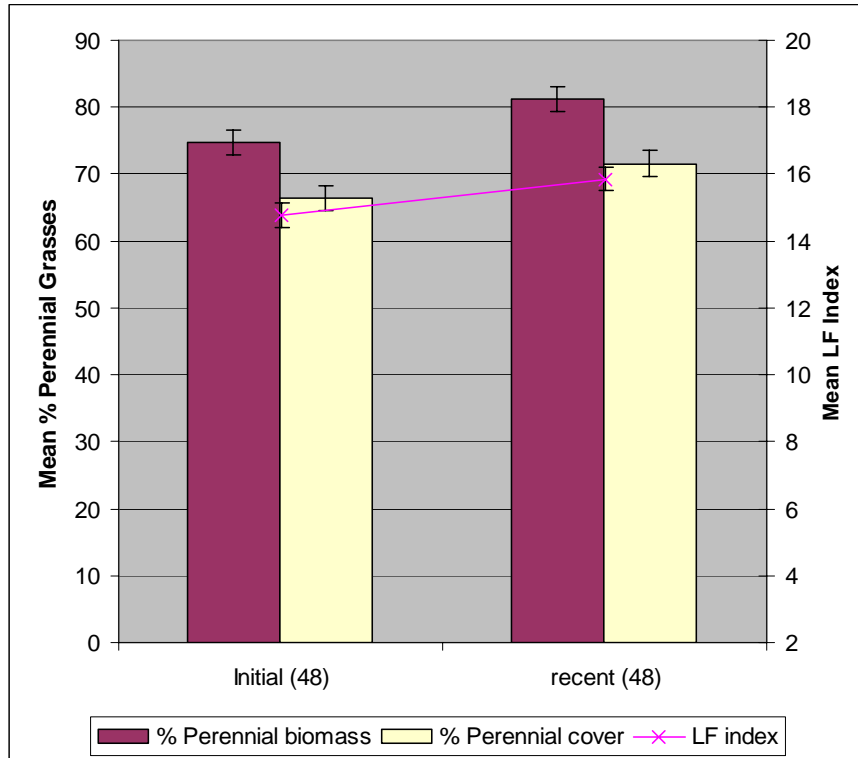


Figure 8: Roper Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index from initial assessment in 1993/1994 to recent assessments in 2004/2005.

VRD Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the VRD Pastoral District is stable to improving.

| Rainfall VRD District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 772 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 660 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 734 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 576 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 38 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 84 mm |

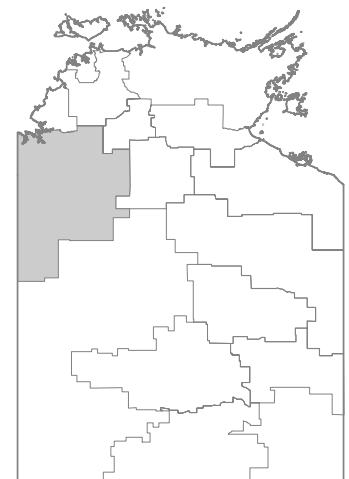


Figure 9: Location of VRD Pastoral District

Overall, rainfall in the VRD Pastoral District for 2006/07 was below average. Northern properties located closer to the coast received good wet season rain. Southern properties received less wet season rain, but received good winter rainfall of between 50-100mm. The last time a rainfall event like this was recorded in the district was in 1974.

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Unseasonal rainfall in June 2007 restricted access to properties in the VRD Pastoral District, limiting the amount of field work undertaken during the reporting period. Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on eight properties during 2006/07.

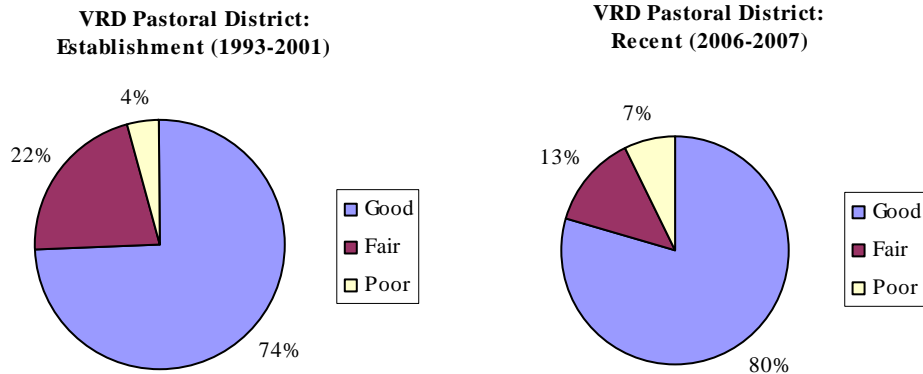


Figure 10: VRD Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment in 1993-2001 derived from 97 sites compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same 97 sites.

From the time of establishment through to the present reporting period, the number of sites assessed as being in good condition has increased from 74% to 80% (Figure 10). From the mid 1990's through to the early 2000's, the VRD experienced above average seasonal conditions. This resulted in most areas across the District responding with higher levels of cover and perennial plant biomass.

In recent years the District has experienced lower rainfall levels and an associated shortened growing season. These conditions have resulted in slight declines in cover levels (Figure 11). Despite slightly lowered cover levels, biomass and landscape function of the region has remained stable suggesting land management practices employed are flexible enough to adapt to the prevailing conditions.

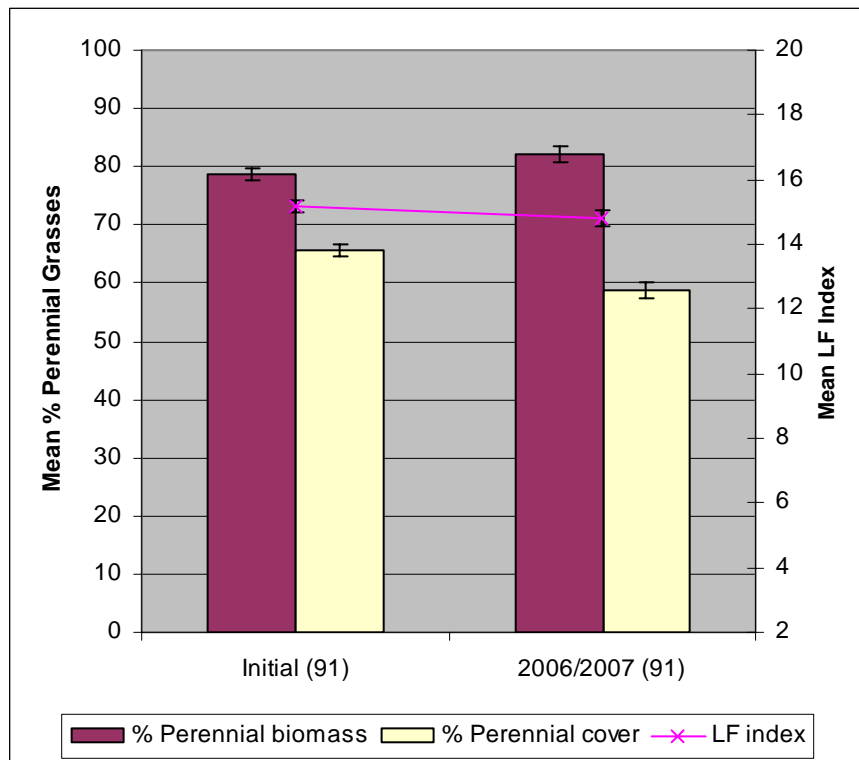


Figure 11: Victoria River District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/2007 reassessments.

Sturt Plateau Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District is good and improving.

| Rainfall Sturt Plateau District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 778 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 617 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 747 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 583 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 31 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 34 mm |

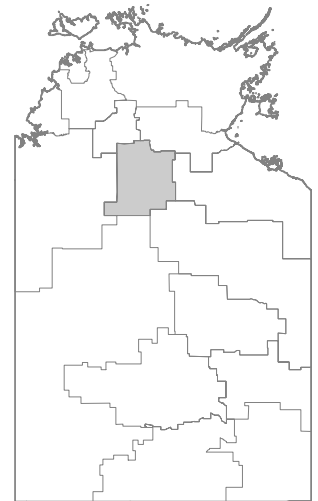
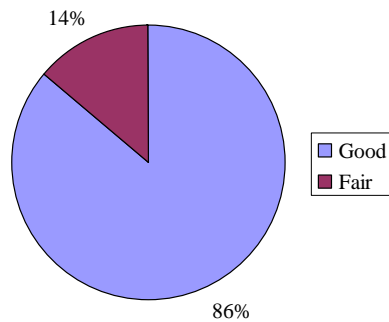


Figure 12: Location of Sturt Plateau Pastoral District

Rainfall in the Sturt Plateau Pastoral District for 2006/07 was below average. Unseasonal rain in June 2007 produced a valuable green flush allowing cattle to maintain condition.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on eight properties during 2006/07. From time of establishment (1993) sites across the Sturt Plateau District have consistently improved in condition. The improvement can be largely attributed to the combination of favourable seasonal conditions combined with sustainable land management and grazing practices. Figure 13 depicts these improvements and changes, with an increase in the number of sites assessed as being in good condition.

Sturt Plateau District: Establishment (1993-2004)



Sturt Plateau District: Recent (2006-2007)

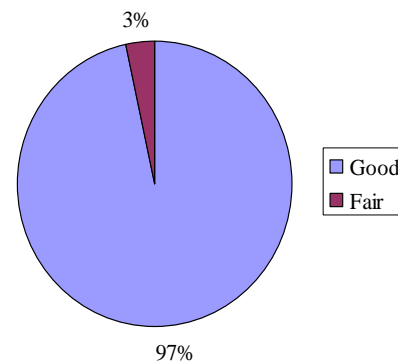


Figure 13: Sturt Plateau Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment in 1993-2004 derived from 29 sites compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same 29 sites.

The Sturt Plateau is a developing Pastoral District, with significant infrastructure and pasture improvement projects carried out across the district in the past ten years. The Plateau does not have the historical grazing scars of other districts, and current land managers are developing their leases utilising current best practice principles. The improving perennial biomass, cover levels and landscape function can be attributed to favourable seasonable conditions and contemporary management practices.

Stable cover and increased landscape function has been consistent for sites across the region since sites were established. The data indicates a stable high level of cover and perennial biomass (refer Figure 14).

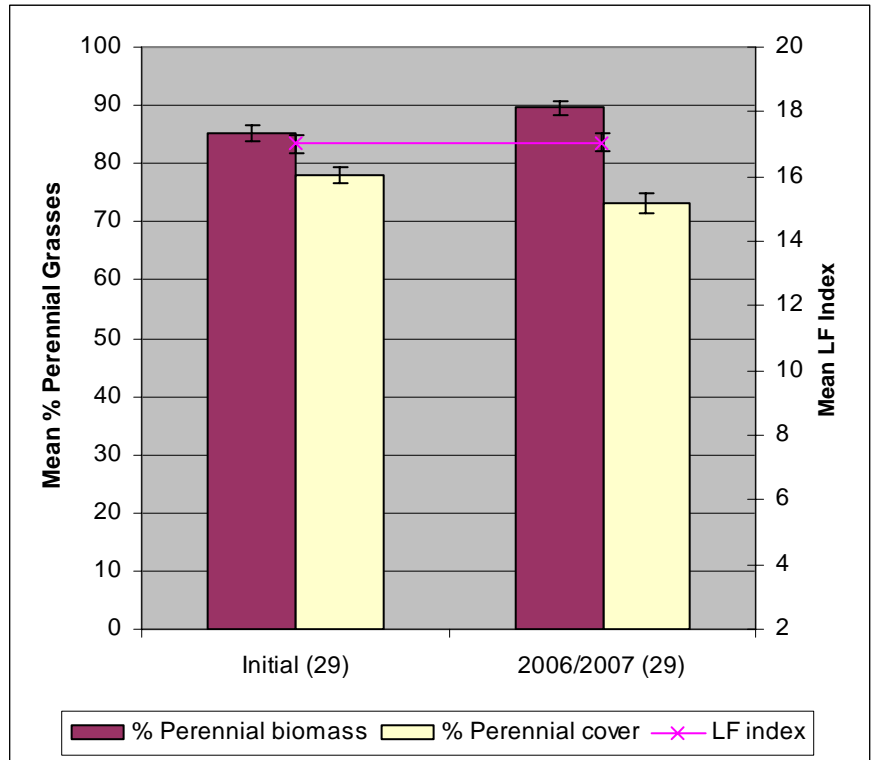


Figure 14: Sturt Plateau District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/07 reassessments.

Gulf Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Gulf Pastoral District is good with an increasing trend.

| Rainfall Gulf District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 763 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 658 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 728 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 619 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 35 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 39 mm |

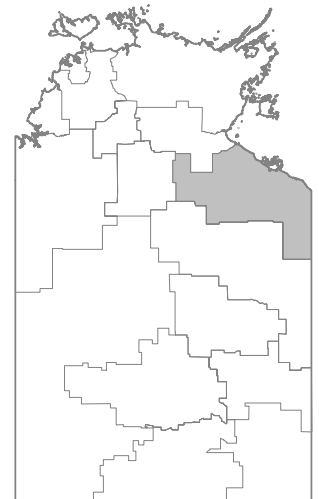


Figure 15: Location of Gulf Pastoral District

Overall, rainfall in the Gulf District during 2006/07 was below average. Above average rainfall was received in the south-west of the district whereas properties in the north-east received below average rainfall.

Pastoral Land Board Annual Report 2006/07

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on five properties in the Gulf Pastoral District during 2006/07. Site condition has improved since initial establishment (Figure 16) with a significant increase in the number of sites assessed as being in good condition. Fifty five percent (55%) of sites were considered to be in good condition at establishment, compared to 89% of sites assessed in 2006/07. No sites were assessed as being in poor condition.

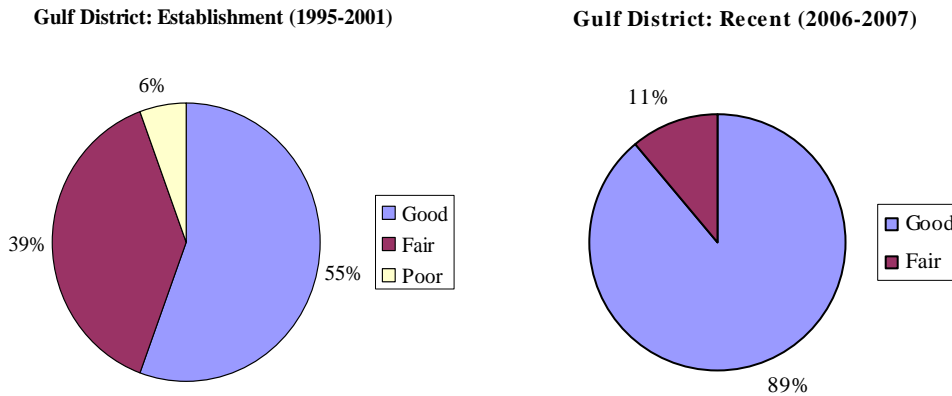


Figure 16: Gulf Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment (1995 – 2001) derived from 18 sites compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006-2007 derived from the same 18 sites.

The improvement in site condition in the Gulf Pastoral District can generally be attributed to a trend towards the replacement of less favourable perennial pasture species such as *Aristida* spp with more favourable pasture species such as *Chrysopogon* spp.

During the late 1980's to early 1990's two properties were subjected to heavy stocking rates within the controlled grazing lands which favoured the dominance of less palatable perennial species such as *Aristida* spp. In the latter years and under more favourable management conditions *Chrysopogon* spp have begun to re-establish and subsequently resulted in the trend towards better site condition. The landscape function analysis discussed below does not recognise the improvement in site condition due to increases in more palatable perennial species over less palatable perennial species, but rather landscape function is based on the presence or absence of perennial grass species as an indication of the landscape's ability to retain nutrients, seed banks and water, i.e. landscape health.

Sites assessed during the 2006/07 reporting period in combination with long term District data for the Gulf Pastoral District indicates that landscape function has remained stable. Perennial biomass has generally remained stable for the period from initial assessment to recent assessment with only slight variation occurring over the period.

During the 2006/07 reporting period there was a slight reduction in both perennial biomass and cover (Figure 17). The slight reduction is attributed to much of the 2006/07 site sample region receiving below average rainfall for the period.

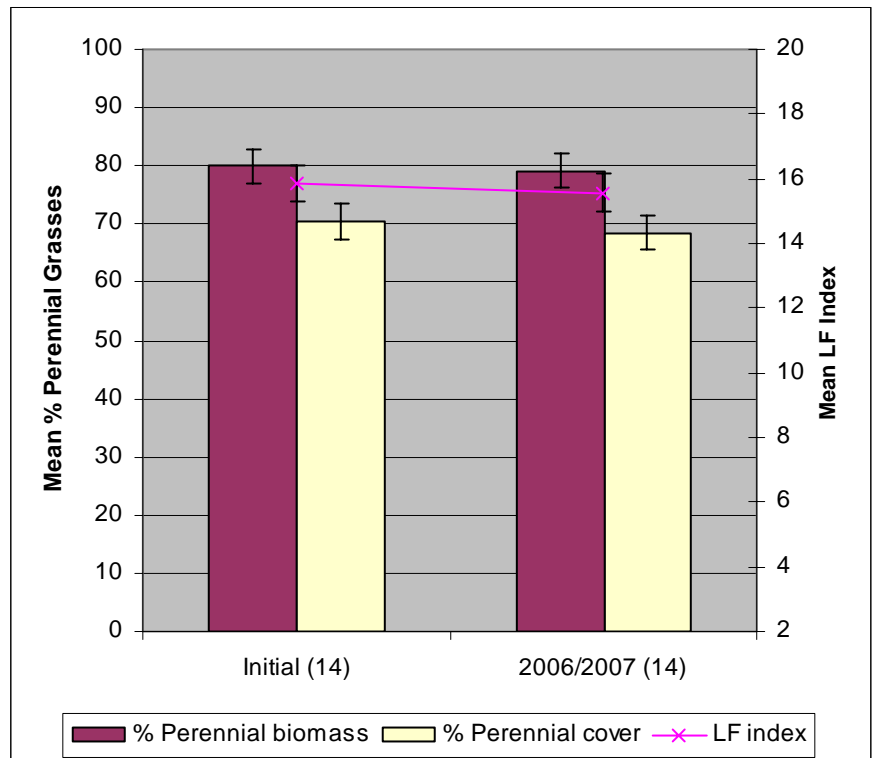


Figure 17: Gulf Pastoral District mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF index trend of 2006/2007 assessed sites from establishment

Barkly Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Barkly Pastoral District is stable.

| Rainfall Barkly District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 447 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 394 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 413 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 350 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 34 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 43 mm |

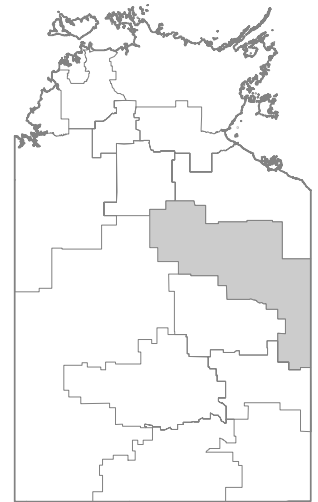


Figure 18: Location of Barkly Pastoral District

During 2006/07 rainfall for the Barkly district was below average.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on 16 properties in the Barkly Pastoral District during 2006/07, concentrated in the eastern section of the district.

From time of establishment to the present, sites across the Barkly District have been recorded as continuing to improve in condition. This can be attributed to favourable seasonal conditions and continual refining and development of the well established properties (increase in water point infrastructure and grazing distribution).

Figure 19 compares the sites at establishment to this reporting period and shows a marked increase in pasture condition. The percentage of sites in good condition has improved from 53% at establishment to 73% in 2006/07.

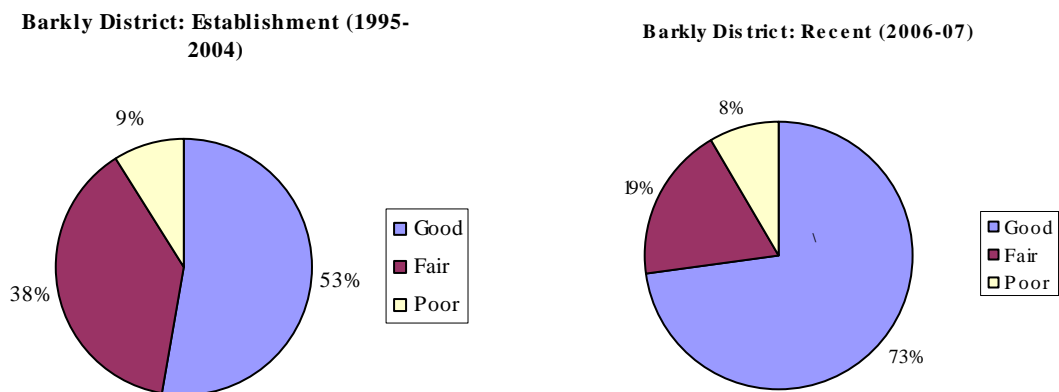


Figure 19: Barkly Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment (1995 – 2004) derived from 214 sites compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same 214 sites

At the time of establishment the sites of the Barkly Pastoral District had a relatively high landscape function. The general trend for the district for the period from initial assessment to the most recent assessment has been stable, with only a slight decrease in the perennial cover and landscape function. Climatic and environmental events such as hot late dry season fires and an increase in the shrubby layer have contributed to the reduction of perennial grass cover of the sites assessed.

Pastoral Land Board Annual Report 2006/07

Figure 20 shows an increase in perennial biomass and a marked decline in perennial cover. The increase in biomass indicates that seasonal conditions were favourable to plant growth.

The reduction in cover has been attributed to drier conditions experienced in the 2005/06 season extending into this reporting period. The drier conditions shorten the flush of annual species, which at the time of assessment creates a higher bare ground count. Sites reassessed during the reporting period reflect the greater district trend of stable rangeland condition with slight decreases due to seasonal conditions. Landscape Function Index (LF) analysis of sites at time of establishment to the most recent assessment indicates that the Barkly Pastoral District is quite robust and has remained relatively stable over 13 years.

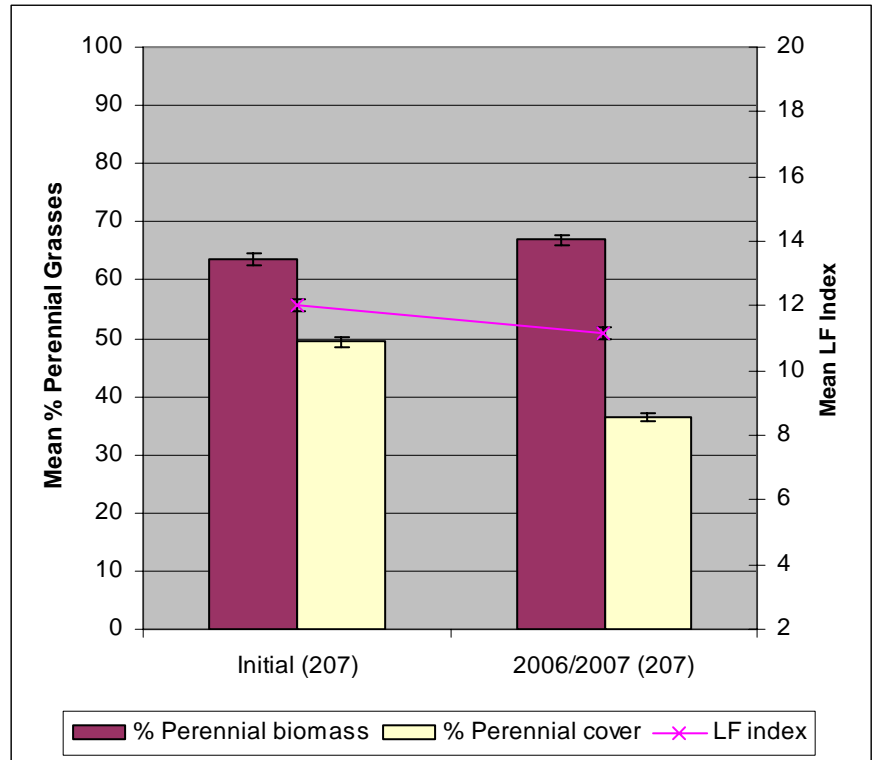


Figure 20: Barkly Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/07 reassessments.

Tennant Creek Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District is relatively stable.

| Rainfall Tennant Creek District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 349 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 483 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 312 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 415 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 37 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 68 mm |

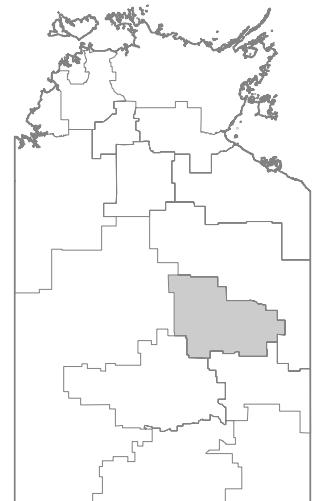


Figure 21: Location of Tennant Creek Pastoral District

The majority of the Tennant Creek Pastoral District received above average to well above average rainfall during 2006/07. Properties in the north-western corner of the district received the lowest falls.

Pastoral Land Board Annual Report 2006/07

Tier 1 data collection was not undertaken in the Tennant Creek Pastoral District during 2006/07. An assessment of sites suitable for LF Index analysis from site establishment to the most recent assessments is presented in Figure 22 and indicates a stable landscape function index.

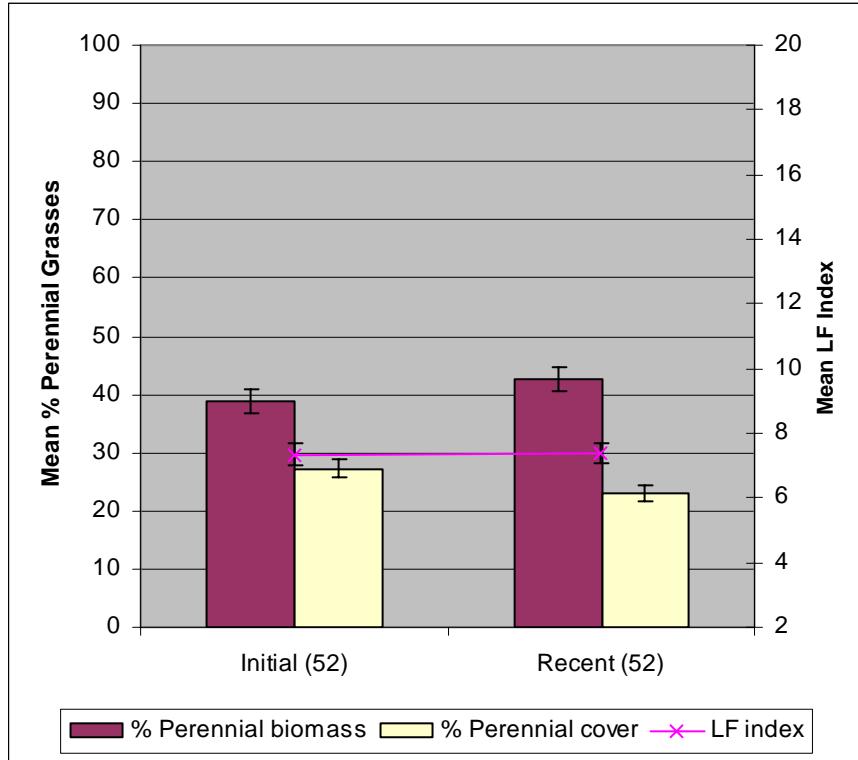


Figure 22: Tennant Creek District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean LF Index for all properties from initial to most recent assessments

Plenty Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Plenty Pastoral District is declining.

| Rainfall Plenty District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 269 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 380 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 217 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 357 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 52 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 23 mm |

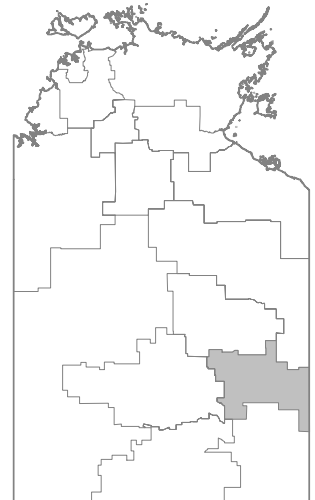


Figure 23: Location of Plenty Pastoral District

During 2006/07, rainfall in the Plenty District was generally above average, with some properties receiving rainfall well above average.

Pastoral Land Board Annual Report 2006/07

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on five properties in northern parts of the Plenty Pastoral District during 2006/07. Figure 24 indicates stable to improved condition from establishment of these sites to this reporting period, with the percentage of sites assessed as good condition increasing from 16% to 35%. However, this condition data is positively influenced by sites recorded in 2007 as being in good condition on one property. This appears to be the direct result of the current pasture management on this property. The percentage of sites assessed as poor condition increased on other properties in the district and there was a general overall decline in condition across four of the five properties assessed.

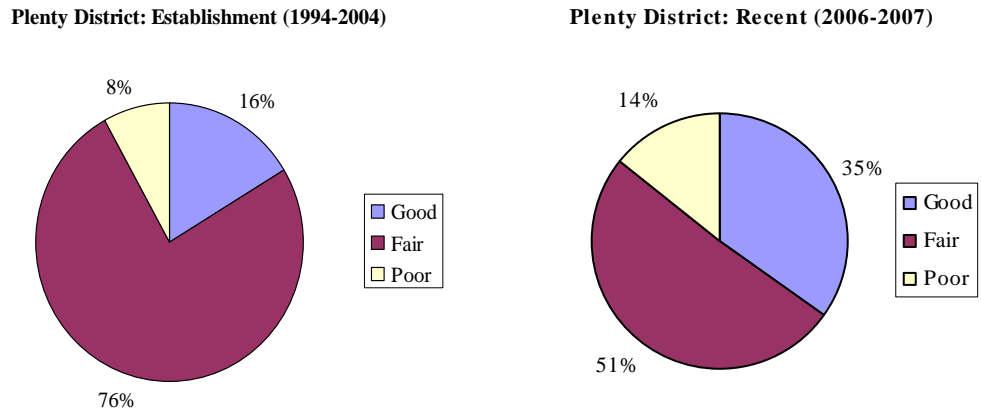


Figure 24: Plenty Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment (1994 – 2004) compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same sites

Analysis of recent data for 2006/2007 indicates that the Landscape Function Index has declined between initial establishment and this reporting period (Figure 25). Factors influencing this decline are likely to include a general decline in condition due to historic grazing impact, continuing dry conditions and wildfires.

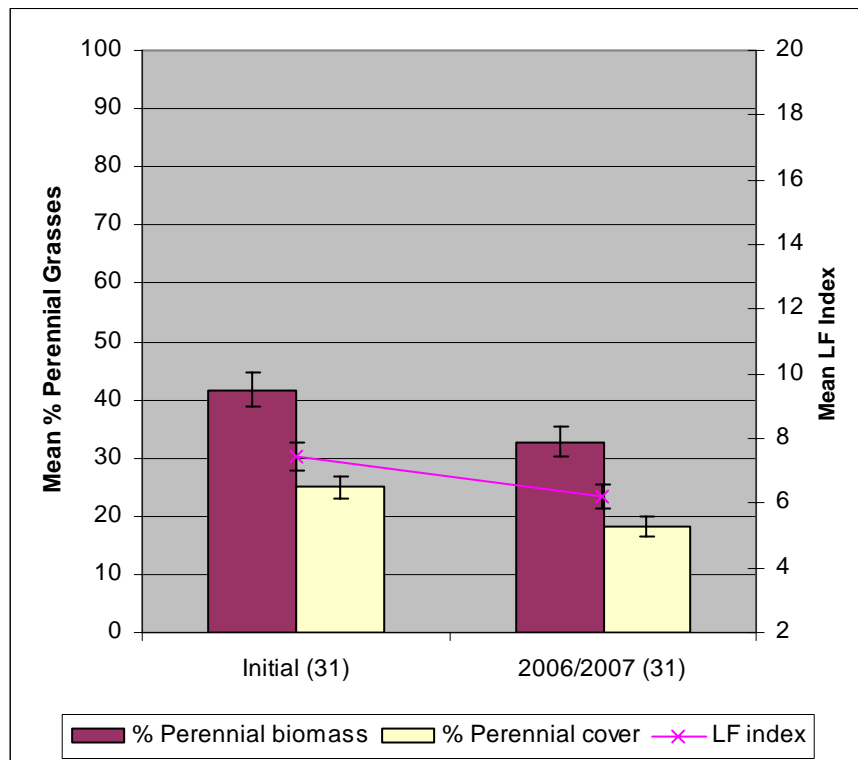


Figure 25: Plenty Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/07

Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District is stable.

| Rainfall Northern Alice Springs District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 294 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 323 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 230 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 303 mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 64 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 20 mm |

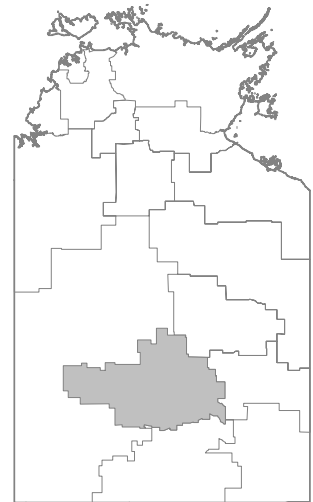
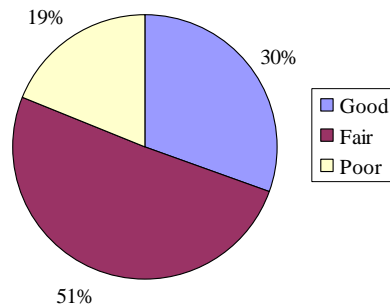


Figure 26: Location of Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District

The northern portion of the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District received well above average rainfall, whereas properties in the western and southern parts of the district received average rainfall.

Tier 1 data collection was undertaken on six properties in the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District during 2006/07. There was a slight improvement in condition between establishment and 2006/07, with the percentage of sites assessed as good condition increasing from 30% to 46%.

**Northern Alice Springs District:
Establishment (1994-1997)**



Northern Alice Springs District: Recent (2006-2007)

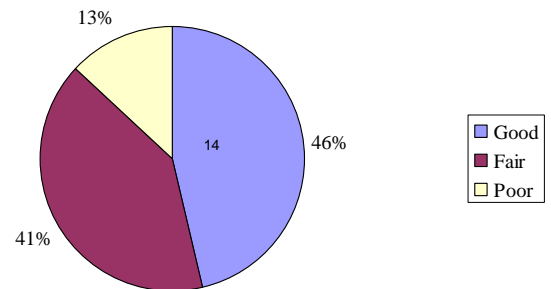


Figure 27: Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment (1994 – 1997) compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same sites

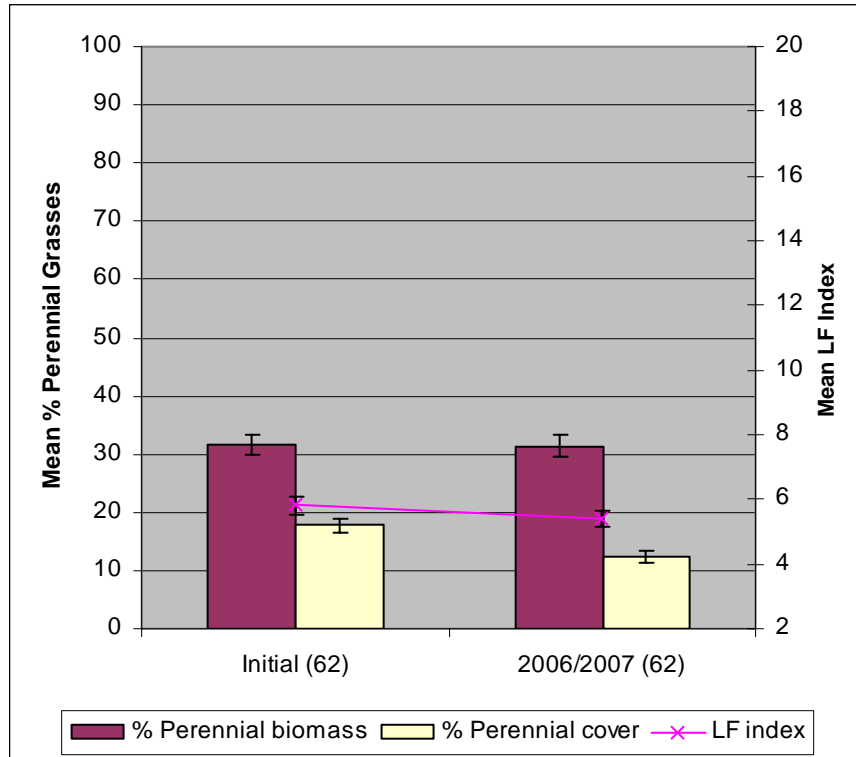


Figure 28: Northern Alice Springs Plenty Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/07

Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the Northern Alice Springs Pastoral District indicates that landscape function has remained relatively stable since site establishment (Figure 28).

Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District Report 2006/07

Land condition in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District is declining.

| Rainfall Southern Alice Springs District | |
|--|--|
| 20 year district average 212 mm | 2006/07 district annual average 162 mm |
| 20 year district average summer (October to March) 150 mm | 2006/07 district average summer (October to March) 150mm |
| 20 year district average winter (April to September) 62 mm | 2006/07 district average winter (April to September) 12 mm |

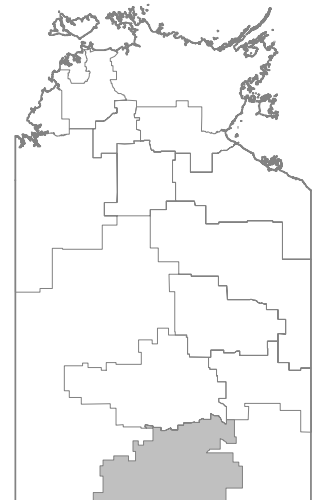


Figure 29: Location of Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District

Rainfall during 2006/07 was average to below average for the majority of the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District. There has been an extended cycle of below average rainfall within the district, with a number of properties in eastern parts of the district being declared eligible for drought assistance in 2005/06 and again in 2006/07.

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The Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District is the most southerly and driest portion of the Alice Springs Area. The unreliable rainfall, the ephemeral nature of the pasture species and the paucity of perennial species presents difficulties for land management and also when assessing land condition in the district. Consequently caution is needed when interpreting data from this very dry region.

Tier 1 monitoring sites were reassessed on 12 properties in the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District during 2006/07. The data shown in Figure 30 indicates that the percentage of sites assessed in Good and Fair condition has decreased between establishment and 2006/07. There has been a corresponding increase in the percentage of sites assessed as Poor condition.

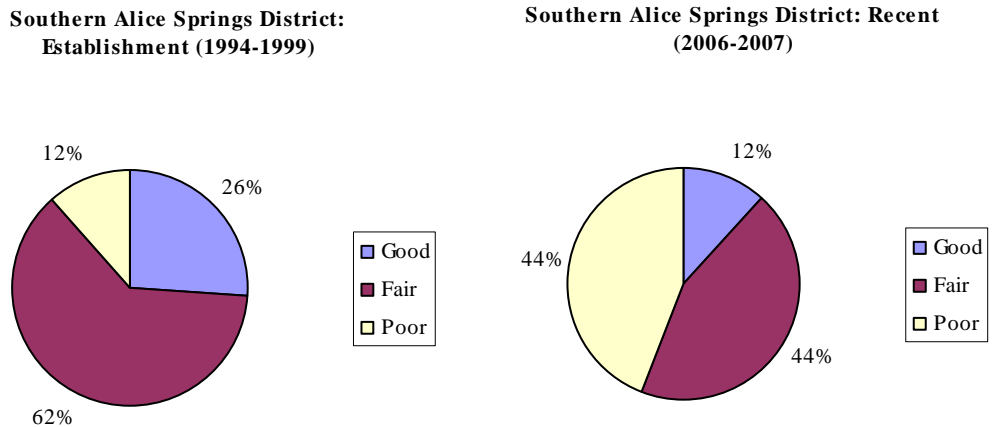


Figure 30: Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District condition assessed at establishment (1994 – 1999) compared to condition assessed at the most recent visit in 2006/07 derived from the same sites

Landscape Function (LF) index analysis for the Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District indicates that landscape function since site establishment, based on perennial species, is stable or has decreased slightly (Figure 31).

Although this seems incongruent with the Tier 1 monitoring data, a number of factors could be contributing including an increase in less palatable perennial species such as Spinifex (*Triodia* spp.) and Lovegrass (*Eragrostis eriopoda*); a decrease in the presence of forbs and annuals due to dry conditions and/or heavy grazing with a corresponding increase in the ratio of less palatable perennial species.

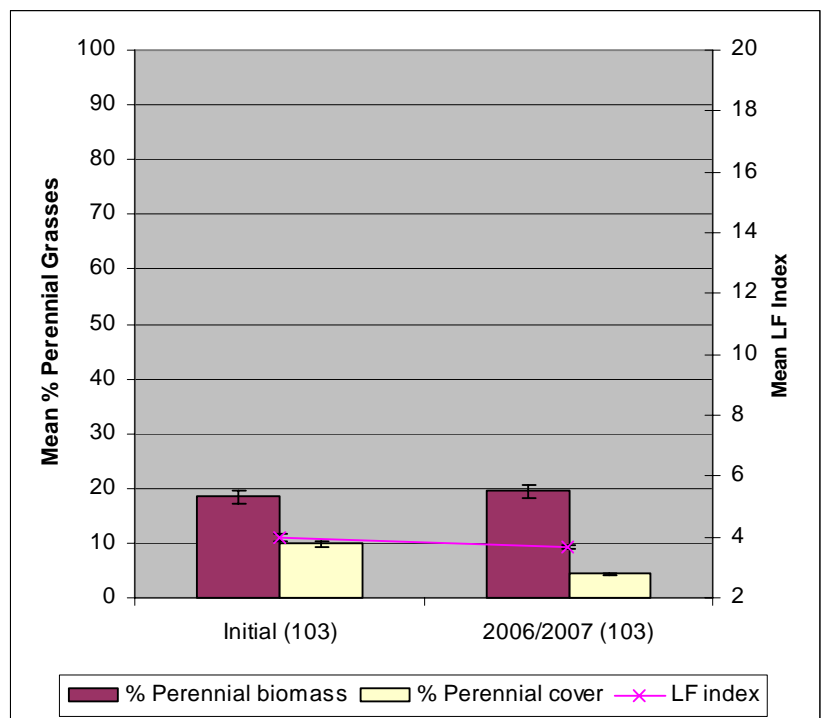


Figure 31: Southern Alice Springs Pastoral District trend of mean % perennial biomass, mean % perennial cover and mean Landscape Function Index from initial assessments to 2006/07

Specific Land Condition Issues

Implementation of Management Plans to address Land Condition Issues

In cases where specific land condition issues are identified on a pastoral property, the Pastoral Land Board may request the lessee to prepare a management plan detailing the action to be taken to address the land management issues which have been identified. It is a basic tenet of the *Pastoral Land Act* 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 Pastoral Land Board seeks voluntary collaboration with pastoral lessees to address land condition issues and implementation of rehabilitation programs.

During 2006/07 action continued in respect of implementation of management plans on a number of properties throughout the Territory.

Drought

The dry conditions experienced in 2004/05 and 2005/06 continued across parts of the south-eastern NT in 2006/07. There were 13 drought inspections carried out in the Alice Springs region for 2006/07 and seven properties were declared in drought.

Erosion on Roads, Fences and other Infrastructure

Erosion on roads, tracks and fence lines continues to be a significant soil management issue on pastoral leases throughout the Northern Territory. Officers of the Rangelands Management Branch, Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sports, adopt a co-operative approach to assist station managers with appropriate soil conservation earthwork design and construction. Voluntary management plans have been prepared by pastoral lessees and successfully implemented on a number of properties to address issues arising from the poor siting of infrastructure, and/or inappropriate maintenance techniques.

Feral Animals

Large feral vertebrates are a significant problem throughout the Northern Territory as a result of their negative impacts on the agricultural and natural environment. For instance, feral animals have been associated with:

- Declines in the abundance and diversity of native plant communities due to trampling and ingestion of seedlings.
- Increased soil erosion and sedimentation of natural waterways and water bodies as a result of trampling.
- Competition with native species for feed and habitat.
- Consumption of seedlings and plant materials, reducing the capacity for the ecosystem to regenerate.
- Increased spread and establishment of weeds.
- Decreased abundances and diversities of aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates.
- Decreased agricultural productivity by reducing the availability of feed for stock.
- Damage to fences and other infrastructure.

Feral Animal Control Program – VRD Pastoral District

The VRD feral animal control program has resulted in the removal of large numbers of feral animals. Since its implementation in 1999, a total of 182,531 feral animals have been removed from the region.

A feral animal survey was undertaken in 2006/07. The results of this survey demonstrated that there has been a 50% reduction in the numbers of donkeys, and a very slight increase in the numbers of feral horses. The survey information was used in conjunction with the survey results collected in 2001 and tally information that has been received from landholders to:

- Estimate the number of feral animals in the region.
- Improve our understanding of the impact of animal removals on the population sizes of ferals in this region.

- Assist in estimating required removal rates of horses and donkeys in the future, in accordance with the *Pastoral Land Act* and the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.
- Increase the accuracy of the notices that will be sent out next year.

The feral animal removal program resulted in renewed negotiations with the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Northern and Central Land Councils to ensure their ongoing participation in this program into the future. In the past, this funding agreement has provided reimbursement for helicopter and ammunition costs for control programs administered on Aboriginal Land Trusts.

Feral Camels in Central Australia

Feral camels occur in SA, WA, Qld and the NT and are an emerging pest. Aboriginal settlements in Central Australia and pastoral properties fringing the Simpson, Great Sandy and Tanami Deserts are experiencing increasing problems with feral camels as the size of the camel population increases. The situation came to a head south of Alice Springs over the summer of 2006/07.

The area south of Alice Springs has experienced below average rainfall over the past 5 years. In December 2006 there were reports of camels moving into a remote Aboriginal settlement (Warakurna) in Western Australia in search of water. In January 2007 a narrow band of rain extended through Alice Springs and to the south into South Australia flooding Hawker and Coober Pedy. Pastoral properties to the immediate south of Alice Springs received some rain at that time. Unfortunately the Great Sandy and southern Tanami Deserts received very little rain from that event and conditions remained very dry there.

As a result, large numbers of camels moved out of the desert country onto pastoral properties to the south-west of Alice Springs in search of water and green pick. These camels caused massive damage to infrastructure and pastures on the affected properties. At this time large numbers of emaciated camels were reported in Docker River in the NT and in several Aboriginal settlements in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) region of South Australia. The problem dissipated towards the end of March 2007 when the majority of camels moved back into more remote desert country in response to widespread rains.

Current management of feral camels is largely *ad hoc* and has little impact on populations overall. Management falls into four categories- (1) fencing off of key areas, (2) mustering for the purpose of commercial sale, (3) field slaughter for pet meat, and (4) culling (both ground-based and aerial). Feral camels are extremely mobile animals and have been known to cover areas in excess of 3,000 square kilometres in a 12 month period. This together with the fact that feral camels inhabit areas which are remote and sparsely populated makes the design and implementation of management programs difficult.

Pastoralists responded to the influx of camels over the 2006/07 summer (described above) by ground shooting camels and engaging the services of a pet meat operator who processed camels on site. The proposed cull at Docker River never occurred. Negotiations between the South Australian government and the council responsible for the APY lands also failed to reach agreement on a proposed cull in the APY lands.

A small number (< 2,000 animals) of feral camels in the Northern Territory were mustered and live-exported in 2006/07. In Alice Springs, about 30 camels per week are currently being processed for the domestic meat market.

The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DK CRC) is undertaking a project regarding management of feral camels with the aim of developing a national management strategy.

Weeds

Weeds threaten the sustainability of rural primary industries in the Northern Territory through increased costs, reduced efficiency and limitations on marketing. They also threaten water resources, freshwater fishing, and conservation of the natural environment, recreation, tourism and traditional hunting.

The Weed Management Branch, Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport. assists landholders to manage weeds by providing technical advice, assisting with weed management plans, carrying out surveys and controlling key infestations.

Major weed issues for each pastoral district during 2006/07 are summarised in Table 2 on page 28.

Pastoral Land Board Annual Report 2006/07

| Pastoral District | Main weed issues & control programs |
|------------------------|--|
| Darwin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) Mimosa continues to be the major weed impacting on the pastoral industry in the Darwin Pastoral District, with approximately \$1.4 million being spent annually in control programs. <i>Senna obtusifolia</i>, <i>Hyptis suaveolens</i> and <i>Sida acuta</i>. These species are abundant in areas impacted by intense fire regimes, feral animal damage and heavy grazing regimes. |
| Katherine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) Lantana (<i>Lantana spp.</i>) Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) Parthenium (<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>) Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) |
| Roper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) Lantana (<i>Lantana spp.</i>) Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) |
| VRD | <p>Control programs were undertaken on the following priority weed species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) Mimosa (<i>Mimosa pigra</i>) Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) <p>Infestations of the following species are showing evidence of significant spread:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lions tail <i>Leonotis nepetaefolia</i> devil's claw (<i>Martynia annua</i>) barleria (<i>Barleria prioritis</i>) and sickle pod (<i>senna obtusifolia</i>) |
| Sturt Plateau | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) Infestation at Daly Waters on vacant Crown land |
| Gulf | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) Parthenium weed (<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>) follow up surveys indicated no new plants |
| Barkly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mesquite (<i>Prosopis spp.</i>) Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) Prickly Acacia (<i>Acacia nilotica</i>) Rubber Bush (<i>Calotropis procera</i>) |
| Tennant Creek | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellyache bush (<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>) Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) Rubber Bush (<i>Calotropis procera</i>) |
| Plenty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parkinsonia (<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>) Rubber Bush (<i>Calotropis procera</i>) |
| Northern Alice Springs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athel Pine (<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>) Athel pine is principally located south of Alice Springs along the Finke River catchment. Approximately 30 large mature athel pine trees have been controlled on Aboriginal land north-west of Alice Springs. |
| Southern Alice Springs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Athel Pine (<i>Tamarix aphylla</i>) |

Table 2: Weed Issues in NT Pastoral Districts 2006/07

Value of the Cattle Industry to the Northern Territory

The pastoral estate of the Northern Territory covers around 606,000 km² comprising 45% of the area of the Northern Territory under 219 pastoral leases. Pastoral holdings vary from small stations of 198 km² to the Territory's largest station, which runs cattle over 12,212 km².

The estimated gross value of production from the NT cattle industry in 2006/07 was \$213 million, representing approximately 38% of the total value of production of the rural and fisheries industries in the Territory. In addition, the pastoral activity provided significant flow-on benefits to other industries, particularly transport.

A total of 426,138 head of cattle were turned off from Territory pastoral properties to interstate and overseas markets in 2006/07. Of the total NT cattle turned off, 49.2% went interstate (209,581 head) and 50.8% were exported overseas live (216,557 head).

Applications considered by the Board during 2006/07

Applications to Clear Pastoral Land 2006/07

(i) Clearing applications approved 2006/07 – Purpose and Areas

| Purpose of clearing | Number of proposals | Area approved |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Introduced pastures/hay production | 6 | 3358.2 ha |
| Clearing of regrowth | 2 | 1855 ha |
| Non pastoral use (horticulture) | 1 | 5.07 ha |
| Totals | 9 | 5218.27 ha |

Table 3: Purpose and areas of pastoral land clearing approved 2006/07

(i) Applications to clear Pastoral Land 2006/07

| | |
|--|----------|
| Applications carried over from 2005/06 | 3 |
| Total number of clearing applications lodged 2006/07 | 7 |
| Applications lapsed/withdrawn | 0 |
| Applications approved | 9 |
| Applications carried over | 1 |

Table 4: Clearing applications determined 2006/07

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Applications for Non Pastoral Use 2006/07

(i) Applications for non pastoral use 2006/07

| | |
|--|----------|
| Applications carried over from 2005/06 | 1 |
| Applications lodged during 2006/07 | 14 |
| Applications approved | 13 |
| Applications lapsed/withdrawn | 0 |
| Applications carried over | 2 |

Table 5: Applications for non pastoral use determined 2006/07

(ii) Purpose of non pastoral use approvals 2006/07

| Non Pastoral Use Activity | No. of Approvals |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Tourism | 8 |
| Horticulture | 3 |
| Store | 1 |
| Mining rehabilitation | 1 |

Table 6: Purpose of non pastoral use approvals 2006/07

Applications to Subdivide a Pastoral Lease into two or more Pastoral Leases 2006/07

| | |
|--|----------|
| Applications carried over from 2005/06 | 1 |
| Applications referred 2006/07 | 1 |
| Applications considered by the Board with recommendation to the Minister | 0 |
| Applications carried over | 2 |

Table 7: Subdivision applications considered 2006/07

Applications to surrender Term Pastoral Leases in exchange for Perpetual Pastoral Leases 2006/07

| | |
|--|----------|
| Applications carried over from 2005/06 | 1 |
| Applications referred 2006/07 | 1 |
| Applications considered by the Board with recommendation to the Minister | 1 |
| Applications carried over | 1 |

Table 8: Applications to convert to perpetual tenure considered 2006/2007

Report on Land Clearing previously approved

It is a requirement of the *Pastoral Land Act* that a lessee shall not undertake clearing on pastoral land without the written consent of the Pastoral Land Board. The Pastoral Land Board has included details of the number of clearing applications and purpose of land clearing approvals in each of its Annual Reports to the Minister since 1992/93. Since 1999/2000, the Board has also reported on progress with previous land clearing approvals. Table 9 below outlines whether clearing has proceeded and current status for determinations of the Board since the last report.

| Year | Clearing Purpose | Area | Comments |
|---------|--|---------|-----------------------------|
| 2004/05 | Introduced pastures & hay production | 100 ha | Clearing completed. |
| 2005/06 | Introduced pastures & hay production | 439 ha | Clearing not yet commenced. |
| 2005/06 | Selective clearing to reduce shrub dominance | 420 ha | Clearing not yet commenced. |
| 2005/06 | Selective clearing to reduce shrub dominance | 300 ha | Clearing commenced. |
| 2005/06 | Introduced pastures & hay production | 1431 ha | Clearing commenced. |

Table 9: Status of land clearing previously approved