

# GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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## Salvinia Weevil breeding and release project

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Briefing paper #1 October 2017

- **Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation's Djurrubu Rangers are at the forefront of managing the highly invasive and damaging salvinia weed which is spreading through many of the waterways of Kakadu National Park**
- Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) is considered one of Australia's most threatening weeds as it is highly invasive and fast growing. Once established it has damaging environmental and economic impacts on waterways
- Recent drier-than-usual wet seasons have created ideal conditions for salvinia. Traditional owners and residents are anxious to ensure the weed does not continue to spread
- The Djurrubu Rangers with technical support and advice from NT government experts have established a breeding facility for the salvinia weevil (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*). This facility has produced a greater volume of weevils than NT weed management experts have previously encountered
- Salvinia weevils are specialised feeders and eat nothing other than *Salvinia molesta*, the weed species currently damaging waterways in Kakadu and other parts of the country
- In large enough numbers the weevils will kill salvinia plants and allow the ecosystem to regain balance over a 1-5 year period
- Releasing weevils to waterways infested with salvinia was first undertaken in the NT in the 1980s
- In a Territory first, the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation breeding program will facilitate the release of a much larger number of weevils than previously. Weed management experts anticipate that this will have a dramatic impact on salvinia infestations within the boundaries of Kakadu National Park.
- This biological method has been successful in controlling salvinia in the Daly River, Papua New Guinea and parts of New South Wales and is most effective in warmer climates
- In addition to weevils there is a role for chemical control of salvinia; this is yet to be undertaken Kakadu
- The outcomes of this collaboration between NT government staff, Kakadu National Park and Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation are a testimony to what can be achieved when government works with community
- To date the Djurrubu Rangers and Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation have covered all costs associated with this weed management operation within Kakadu National Park. The next logical step is commercial contracts from Parks for traditional owners to continue weevil work as well as the chemical control of this devastating weed.