Minister for Land Resource Management Willem Westra van Holthe has congratulated Bushfires NT for their quick response in protecting properties after a wildfire broke out today at Mala Plains.

The wildfire began in the Mala Plains area, south of the Cox Peninsular Road between the Stuart Highway and Berry Springs, and due to the quick response from Bushfires NT staff and volunteers, was able to be contained.

Mr Westra van Holthe said 14 volunteer units, two staff units, one tanker, one articulated loader, two helicopters and one water bombing fixed wing aircraft were used in containing the fire.

“The control of this serious situation was due to the quick actions of our dedicated workers and volunteers,” he said.

“Without their rapid response this wildfire could have caused a lot more damage to properties and infrastructure in the Mala Plains area.

“Volunteer services were brought in from Livingstone, Berry Springs, Darwin River, Labasheeda Park, Manton and Acacia Hills.”

Bushfires NT estimate 20 houses and numerous outbuildings and other infrastructure were saved, along with one large mango orchard.

“Unfortunately one shed, one donga, one container, one old truck and two old vehicles were lost along with damage to fencing and irrigation lines,” Mr Westra van Holthe said. “One bore shed and equipment were also lost.”

Mr Westra van Holthe said crews would be working throughout the night and a fire ban would be in place tomorrow.

“I urge the community and public to please be vigilant tomorrow in regards to fire safety,” he said. “At this stage we are not sure of how the wildfire began, however at this time of the year, these sorts of fires are quite common, so please be vigilant.

“There is a very high fuel load in the area due to the presence of heavy gamba grass infestation, and this contributed to the seriousness of the situation.

“Our emergency services crew do such an amazing job, and I congratulate them on their hard work and effort they put in to save these properties.

“It's a credit to them that this situation turned out as well as it did,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

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