

Submission to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee about the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 (Serial 17)

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the content of this important piece of legislation. I'd like to thank the Committee in advance for considering my comments.

I have lived in the Northern Territory for more than thirty years and had a range of professional positions in the public and Not for Profit sectors. I am very involved in the local community and raised my family here, I am proud to be a Territorian.

The Territory is a unique and challenging place culturally, economically and environmentally. I understand that our new Government is focussed on strengthening the Territory's economy and encouraging private investment and hope they are successful in doing so. My comments about this draft Bill are based on concerns for the well-being and prosperity of the Territory's people and environment.

I understand the Scrutiny Committee will inquire into:

- i. Whether the Assembly should pass the Bill
 - ii. Whether the Assembly should amend the Bill
 - iii. Whether the Bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of the individuals; and
 - iv. Whether the Bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament.
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- i. **I am opposed to this Legislation and do not think the Assembly should pass the Bill.**
 - ii. If the Government does decide to pass it, please consider the following points:

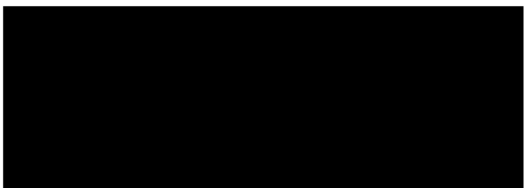
Our economy needs efficient processes, but I do not think it's necessary or advisable to hand so much decision-making power to two roles in Government. Decades of Territory Governments, both Labor and Country Liberal have set up a framework for administration of the Territory that includes assessment of projects by experts and recommendations to government. The 'step in' powers in the proposed legislation will make it possible to over-ride procedures that have protected our democratic rights, built the Territory's economy and safeguarded its natural assets.

I am opposed to the inclusion of the Heritage Act 2011. The places and objects listed in this Act are there following an exhaustive assessment process and are irreplaceable parts of the Territory's social and cultural fabric.

A transparent mechanism for balancing competing objectives should be built into the legislation. Some of the projects and Territory Development Area (TDA) that will be considered under the proposed legislation will have conflicting objectives and multiple risks to the Territory's economy, environment and social fabric. For this reason, potential investors, both private and public will look for sound decision making that holds up to scrutiny. Territorians will also want to know the reasons for support of major projects and declarations of TDA.

Major projects should not be assessed primarily on potential economic benefits to the Territory. For the long-term well-being of our economy, society and environment, much broader considerations must be factored into decisions. This is true for all projects, but particularly major projects where the costs of getting it wrong will be felt by Territorians for many decades to come.

- iii. **The rights of individuals will be infringed by the provision for the Territory Coordinator to authorise people to enter private land without a warrant or permission in order to develop a TDA. This should not be included in the legislation.**



Deborah Hall



18 February 2025