

**From:** [Liz Howells](#)  
**To:** [LA Committees](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Submission to Territory Coordinator  
**Date:** Tuesday, 18 February 2025 1:09:30 PM

---

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]  
Date: Fri, Jan 17, 2025 at 10:08 AM  
Subject: Submission to Territory Coordinator  
To: <otc.consultation@nt.gov.au>

I am a long-term resident of Darwin River and I live on a 40-acre bush block.

My primary concern is that the position of Territory Coordinator will allow projects of all kinds to be approved and expedited without appropriate oversight. This bill provides for the speeding up of certain decisions and processes, the taking over of certain decisions and processes by an unelected officer, and the striking out of certain Acts or parts of Acts where certain decisions or processes are concerned. All this without any public consultation. The tabling in Parliament of an exemption is after the fact.

I want to query the idea of economic prosperity being the "primary principle" which will drive all of this. The primary principle of any governmental activity in the Territory should be the health and happiness of the current residents and their descendants. If this depends primarily on the economic prosperity of the Territory then the bill is justified but I am not convinced that increasing the population significantly in order to provide a workforce for the projects that are deemed necessary to drive economic prosperity will produce a set of healthier and happier residents.

Considering the amount of gas to be extracted from under the ground in the Territory it is reasonable to assume that the large majority of these projects will run on fossil fuels rather than renewable energy. I am seriously concerned that therefore emissions of carbon dioxide will climb ever higher. The carbon capture and storage technique is not the panacea it is touted to be. It has not been tested at scale or over time. So isn't it fanciful to imagine that jobs will be enough to attract people here and then convince them to stay if temperatures are also climbing ever higher?

But what of jobs for current residents? There is a huge need for people to work on land and coastal areas removing weeds and feral animals, looking after injured wildlife, revegetating burnt/destroyed lands, saving rare and endangered species. Perhaps these are projects the Coordinator could prioritise and expedite.

I am concerned also about the mental health of our government officials elected and unelected. The resentments of a department head who has been told to speed up a process, for example, may lead to bad decisions being made as to what can be done quicker or dispensed with in order to speed things up. And the effects on a minister of having an unelected officer take over the responsibility for a decision which she would otherwise have made can mean she feels rebuffed and does a less than adequate job with her remaining responsibilities.

I also want to comment on the reasons for issuing exemption notices. The Guide to the Territory Coordinator Bill gives as one reason to issue such a notice "where an existing legislative requirement does

not have any reasonable application for regulating a complex or novel significant project." If there are new and more complex situations which the current laws do not apply to, then new laws are needed. The urgency to advance economic prosperity is not so extreme that it cannot wait for a new and more suitable law to be passed.

We break rules if there is a crisis, to save the lives of people and animals, or even food sources and homes. But there is no crisis in the NT now. We have a cost of living problem which is causing grief to some of us. And there are ways of dealing with this which don't involve doubling our emissions and wrecking the habitats of precious creatures e.g. turtles.

I consider that the pristine nature of the Northern Territory environment is key to our economic prosperity. This pristine nature is exactly what this bill is threatening.

The rainforests, wetlands, savannas, rivers and their catchments, coastal and marine environments have a complexity which is way beyond an agricultural or mining project, extremely complex as these projects are. Natural ecosystems have been forming over billions of years starting with microorganisms and progressing through the unicellular to the multicellular organisms. So we have amoebas, algae, protista, bacteria, fungi and much much more. And the frogs birds mammals lizards all have become what they are alongside the later versions of their minuscule ancestors.

The whole point of this bill is to enhance economic prosperity but the Coordinator has also to take into account our natural environment which is already under such huge pressure from clearing, pollution, weeds, climate change. With all this responsibility will he listen to scientists when they tell him what a river needs to remain healthy, what is lost when an ocean floor is dredged or what kind of risk to our aquifers does fracking pose? Everyone has bores out in the regions.

Thankyou,  
Liz Howells

