

19/02/2025

Email to: LA.Committees@nt.gov.au

Territory Co-ordinator Draft Bill

Dear Sir/Madam,

I appreciate the opportunity to submit my views on this proposed legislation.

I do not believe that this draft bill should be approved and is not in the interests of NT citizens. This draft bill increases the risk of further government project failures at community expense, and potential environmental catastrophe.

The Territory Controller position does not belong in any democracy, where power is vested in one politically appointed position who can operate outside of existing legislation. Not only citizen rights, but protection of the environment, water, land and wildlife will be able to be denied or overridden. This is to the NT's detriment. The TC position appears to have unfettered power that is alarmingly dictatorial in nature and is frightening in its scope.

Major projects of "economic significance" promoted by governments and provided with significant taxpayer funds, have gone nowhere or have failed. The list is long, for example; Project Sea Dragon, Core Lithium, water bottling in Arnhem land and major building projects such as the 6-star hotel at the waterfront and redevelopment of Poinciana Hotel under Chief Minister Gunner. These failures are nothing to do with those who care and scrutinise government activity, such as those who care about the environment, but who are unfairly blamed for lack of progress in the NT.

Inpex was lauded as the economic saviour for the NT – however, the economic situation is worse now than when Inpex began. Property prices have never recovered and population growth has stagnated. Now, the Middle Arm "Sustainable Development" petrochemical project, fracking and corporate agriculture are proposed to be the economic saviours but sadly are lacking in financial certainty and suitability for our fragile NT environment.

Lee Morgenbesser¹, Associate Professor, School of Government and International Relations, Griffith University highlights the risks of "state capture" of government. He points out how an unelected, leader appointed position, has unfettered control of American institutions, beyond the ability of Congress to contain. He lists potential results including loss of accountability, lack of parliament oversight and making of biased decisions. The Territory Controller position risks are potentially similar in the NT. The position and this proposed legislation must never be confirmed.

¹ Lee Morgenbesser 2025. "Is Elon Musk taking over the US government? Here's how 'state capture' works – and why we should be concerned. https://theconversation.com/is-elon-musk-taking-over-the-us-government-heres-how-state-capture-works-and-why-we-should-be-concerned-249471?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=bylinecopy_url_button