

11 March 2019

Ms Jennifer Buckley, Committee Office  
Department of the Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 3721  
DARWIN NT 0801

Lodgement via email: [SPSC@nt.gov.au](mailto:SPSC@nt.gov.au)

Dear Ms Buckley

**Comments on *Water Amendment Bill 2019* (Serial 80)**

The Minerals Council of Australia Northern Territory Division (MCA NT) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Northern Territory Government's *Water Amendment Bill 2019*.

The MCA is the peak industry organisation representing Australia's exploration, mining and minerals processing industry, nationally and internationally, in its contribution to sustainable development and society. The MCA's strategic objective is to advocate public policy and operational practice for a world-class industry that is safe, profitable, innovative, and environmentally and socially responsible, attuned to its communities' needs and expectations.

Within this context, the MCA NT has advocated, through submissions on every Northern Territory Government draft policy, strategy, discussion paper and draft legislation, for policy and regulatory settings based on and commensurate with risk and developed via *bona fide* consultation with our organisation and members of Territory-based mining companies.

MCA member companies are signatories to *Enduring Value – the Australian Minerals Industry Framework for Sustainable Development* and have a long standing commitment to the effective and responsible management of Australia's water resources.

Although the minerals industry is a comparatively small user of water nationally (2.9 per cent), the industry can be a significant water user at the local or regional level, and the availability and security of supply is a critical business risk for the minerals sector.<sup>1</sup> Minerals operations face a wide variety of other water management challenges, including use and treatment of unacceptably-poor quality water, mine dewatering and the management of excess water. For these reasons, the MCA NT acknowledges the critical importance of a sound regulatory framework to effectively manage risks to the sustainable use of the Territory's water resources.

Within this context and the Government's election commitment to greater regulatory transparency, the MCA NT understands and supports the objectives for which the *Water Amendment Bill* has been drafted, including bringing the mining and petroleum industries into line with other water-using industries in the Territory under the amended *Water Act*.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2610 – Water Account Australia, 2012-13

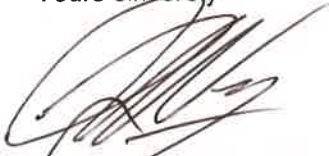
As the *Water Amendment Bill* deals specifically with implementing recommendations from the *Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing in the Northern Territory*, it is not relevant to the minerals sector, except in the broader context of environmental regulatory reform for sustainable management of activities of the Territory's resources industries. In this context, the MCA NT reiterates its oft-quoted policy position that the extent of regulation and associated administrative processes should be efficient, effective and commensurate with anticipated environmental risk.

In relation to the four questions put to the MCA NT in your email of 15 February 2019, our response is as follows:

- The Assembly should pass the Bill
- The Bill can be passed as written
- The Bill appears to have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals
- The Bill appears to have sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament.

Should you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 08 8981 4486.

Yours sincerely



Drew Wagner

Executive Director