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Subject: Territory Coordinator Bill Submission
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Dear Members of the Legislation Scrutiny Committee,

I write to express concerns regarding the *Territory Coordinator Bill*. I would like to echo myriad issues with the bill and the extraordinary powers it provides to the position that have been raised in submissions by the Environment Centre NT.

I wish to focus this submission in particular on the removal of the proposed section 79 of the draft Territory Coordinator Bill which provided that a person could not be eligible for appointment to the position of Territory Coordinator if they were an 'office holder' of a body corporate that made a reportable donation to a political party in the previous 3 years. It is my reading that this proposed section would have made the current appointee, Stuart Knowles, ineligible for appointment as he was an office holder at INPEX when the company made a reportable donation leading up to the August 2024 NT election.

The *Territory Coordinator* will hold significant authority in coordinating major projects and government responses, making it imperative that the role remains free from actual or perceived political influence. The previous requirement that appointees must not have made political donations was an essential safeguard against conflicts of interest and undue influence. Its removal undermines public confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the appointment process.

Without this restriction, there is a heightened risk that the position could be occupied by individuals with financial ties to political parties, raising concerns about potential bias in decision-making. No reasons have been given for why this section has been removed from the bill. Given the Territory's history of concerns around governance transparency, maintaining strict eligibility criteria is crucial to ensuring trust in public administration.

I urge the Committee to reconsider the removal of this requirement and reinstate it as a necessary safeguard for transparency and good governance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jackson Bursill

