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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to provide feedback regarding the planned Territory Coordinator office, and my very strong opposition to the proposal.

I have lived in the NT for over 34 years, I have raised a family here and worked as a nurse in roles across various sectors and communities over that entire time. I have been and still am committed to contributing positively to our community and the people who are part of this wonderful place. I love our Territory lifestyle, our wild environment and the people who live here. I have always hoped to live out my days in Darwin. Proposals for a gas hub in Middle Arm and the destructive fracking projects in the Beetaloo Basin are making me reconsider.

I am profoundly concerned by the creation of the new position of Territory Coordinator. From my understanding, it is proposed that the role be allocated powers and controls that are exempt from the laws and policies that have been put in place to protect our community and our precious environment.

The changed draft of the Bill is even more alarming the initial draft, as it now includes removal of limitations on the exercise of powers that involve the Scared Sites, the Heritage and Pastoral Land Acts. I am not doing a deep dive into all that is included in the proposed Bill, but I have great concerns about the concentration of power to an unelected bureaucrat and the ability of the role to override current processes.

The Chief Minister was elected to lead the Territory, a Territory Coordinator was not. The proposal to give far reaching powers to a non-elected official goes against our democratic system.

I believe the proposal would also give increased powers to the Chief Minister to overstep current processes, which is also anti democratic in its essence. The proposed centralisation of powers to the Chief Minister and an unelected bureaucrat is absolutely disturbing.

The current government seeks to create a powerbase that will enable the opinion and work of experts to be sidelines in order for business interests to prevail, whatever the actual costs to communities. The drive for economic growth (for selected industries) above community health and interests is apparent in all that this proposed Territory Coordinator Bill represents.

I am extremely concerned that projects that are dangerous to our environment and will impact widely on the health of our community will get approvals outside of the existing processes. I am alarmed that the incumbent is a previous employee of Inpex, a company that swept into Darwin, causing rent and house prices to skyrocket in the short term and altered the community while the gas hub was in the development stage and then, did not provide the promised longer term employment. Inpex did not improve the economic situation for people living in Darwin, it made life harder during the building phase, while making FIFO workers richer. We are left with worsened air quality and a blight on our harbour. Previous employment with Inpex is not a glowing reference and does not inspire confidence.

I understand the new government is desirous of implementing change quickly, and they believe the new role will streamline processes. My feedback is that the current processes are intended to ensure that new projects will not impact adversely on the lives and health of our community, or cause damage to our environment, including our water, flora, fauna and land we inhabit. We currently have laws and statutory processes that are required to be met before projects can go ahead. These laws were developed to provide a safety net to guarantee that harm is not caused by corporations seeking profits. This proposal could see these laws and acts overstepped by two individuals who do not necessarily have the knowledge or skills to understand the ramifications of projects for the health of our community and environment. That is why we have processes, Acts and laws in place.

The industries lining up to reap benefits from the Territory resources have demonstrated they are not able to be accountable as it is. We have had spills of contaminants in the Beetaloo, and Inpex was able to continue production for over a year without either of its acid gas incinerators working. The air quality in 2023 and 2024 was regularly at hazardous levels. Even our current laws and processes have not provided enough protection for our community as they have not always been upheld. Without them, we would have no protection at all.

As a nurse I am very aware of the impact of the environment on the health of our community. Some of our most vulnerable people will be impacted by current projects that see water and other valuable assets given away to billionaires. Residents in Darwin are already impacted by poor air quality and this will only get much worse if Middle Arm goes ahead. Climate change is real and already affecting us all, how long before Darwin becomes unliveable? I believe that we are the Territories greatest asset, yet it appears that our elected officials prioritise private business above the communities they have been elected to represent. Please prove me wrong by scrapping this proposal.

Regards Louise Brown