

## Legislative Scrutiny Committee

### Submission: Territory Coordinator Bill 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025. I was born and raised in Darwin and have called the Northern Territory home for over 40 years. As an educator and passionate Territorian, I deeply value our region's natural environment and rich biodiversity and understand economic potential must be carefully balanced to ensure long-term sustainability. I appreciate the government's efforts to strengthen the economy while navigating this balance, and I commend the work being done in this area.

I urge the committee to reconsider passing the 2025 Territory Coordinator Bill, particularly sections 68-73. While step-in notices may be intended to streamline significant projects, I have concerns about their potential consequences.

1. **Risk of Overreach (Section 68(2))** – Granting the Territory Coordinator unilateral authority to assume control over statutory decisions risks undermining the expertise and autonomy of responsible entities. Without strict criteria for intervention, this could lead to unnecessary interference in established decision-making processes.
2. **Disruption to Existing Work (Sections 70 & 71)** – While consultation is required, a step-in notice strips the original entity of authority, which could create inefficiencies and delays. This weakens collaboration and can erode confidence in governance.
3. **Inconsistencies in Decision-Making (Section 73(2))** – Allowing the Coordinator to impose conditions beyond existing law raises concerns about fairness. Statutory decisions should remain grounded in established legal frameworks.
4. **Suppression of Diverse Input (Section 71(d))** – Requiring the original entity to cease all actions except to comply with the Coordinator's directives may stifle valuable perspectives and alternative solutions, limiting the effectiveness of decision-making.

While I understand the importance of efficient statutory processes, step-in powers should always be used with caution and strong safeguards to maintain transparency, accountability, and balance. Without these

protections, the Act could unintentionally disrupt governance and economic development rather than improve it.

I appreciate your time in considering my concerns and urge a careful review of this legislation. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Regards,

Sara Scrutton

[REDACTED]

19th February 2025