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To: [LA Committees](#)
Subject: Draft Bill for a Northern Territory Coordinator
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To
Legislative Scrutiny Committee,
NT Legislative Assembly
Darwin NT 0800


Re Draft Bill for a Northern Territory Coordinator

My reading of the draft Bill is well represented by the NT Environment Centre Submission to this review stage by the NT Legislative Assembly Scrutiny Committee.

I question the process change described in the draft Bill for a Territory Coordinator.

I forward my original submission sent during your consultation phase prior to presentation of the draft Bill to the NT Legislative Assembly.

In that I aimed to question priorities and assumptions made by the acting Territory Coordinator at a Consultation he gave in Palmerston 2024.

Joanna Parish


Attachment

To
Northern Territory Government
Darwin

Re: Territory Coordinator proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Northern Territory Government initiative for a Territory Coordinator.
Your Discussion Paper and the Consultation held in Palmerston, 2024, frame my submission

This Consultation provided by the acting Northern Territory (NT) Coordinator presented a NT economic agenda 2024-2028.

My Questions are on

- NT Economic problems and
- the design of NT Coordinator's roles

Questions on NT Economy

When I went to hear the current salaried acting Territory Coordinator he spoke on his expected role. He gave us an economic picture when he worked to Inpex. It appeared a rise in Northern Territory (NT) economic activity occurred when this Japanese owned oil and gas company was in its development stage but declined when it withdrew labour requirements.

I seem to remember the Inpex company did not offer a sustained economy to the NT. The reason for this may have been the lack of revenue gained by NT Government: sometimes called 'royalty' payments or a lack of taxing powers Australian Governments have for off shore export extractive industries.

Two interconnected NT economic problems were not provided at this consultation.

NT Economy

1. Lower the cost of supply

All food, essential to us all, is high in cost compared to other more populous places in Australia.

Territorians rely on the supply of their food.

Each small town in the Territory has a small business supplying food to its populations. ALPA appears an exception to this generalised NT example.

2. A transition to a renewable electricity economy appears a problem.

The mix of infrastructure may impede this transition. The cost of supply is questionable. It is known of course that the Commonwealth Government gives funds to 'keep consumers' price down' as we simply say. It is a considerable amount to invest in the current system.

Why does the Commonwealth Government and Territory Government provide a commitment to Territory living people, yet supply an electrical service at its inflated cost?

The current Utilities Commission suite of organisations set up by the NT Government as Jacana, PowerWater and Territory Generation appear to be unable to find a workable transition strategy to convert their supply lines to renewables.

Transition Economy

A common perception I hold as a fact is electricity delivered by renewable energy systems will be cheaper, or like the Inpex firm's development phase, an employer of new trained salaried staff. It is thought that all businesses small and large and all services, health services, transport services will prove cheaper to run, if delivery of cheap electricity is sold to them.

A comparison exists to costs

A small number of NT owner occupied properties have also invested in rooftop solar powered services. A number of schools also. These may offer a comparative group to gas serviced places. Is there therefore proof of lower cost? Other examples exist for comparison: the Defence facilities, and the Darwin airport terminal services, a few hotels.

If my assumption on costs: renewable energy versus fossil fuels is correct then I conclude another transition could occur.

Transport to the NT is powered by diesel or petrol, yet considering the importance of supply: for food, manufactured goods, and I imagine all building supplies. Lowering these supply costs, for the suppliers and the consumers is surely an important economic problem to solve?

An important factor for all Territorians, not referred to by the acting Territory Coordinator

3. Prevention from harm

Territory populations are increasingly threatened by changing weather patterns.

We have in recent years floods causing inundation of homes, havoc with roads, bridges, the one rail line.

Protection from harm is evident from governments after these severe weather events. Governments have contributed to evacuations, and then rebuilding services for peoples' displaced.

Extreme heat is evident, scientifically recorded and forecast to rise, making peoples' survival dependant on cooling infrastructure.

Given that the acting Territory Coordinator did not mention these two particular economic problems nor prevention from harm within his role, I ask further questions on the design of his job.

Current processes

The NT context of governance is enveloped within what is described as 'a Westminster model'. The practice of bureaucratic advice is embedded, so the Department of Chief Minister has a policy coordination role, noting within guard/guide rails certain created legislation so policy formulation can assist elected Cabinet members' decision making. A difference of course is the lack of elected members' review or 'upper assembly' and perhaps also compounded by a dominance by one party in the current Legislative Assembly, as occurred at our recent NT election.

Why would this new Territory Coordinator have extra powers over previous legislated guard/guide rails?

And why forego the existing Cabinet process?

My submission therefore seeks to identify the most important economic agendas in the NT for Government's action.

Joanna Parish



Further References

Discussion Paper on Territory Coordinator (2024) Northern Territory Government.

Discussion Paper on 'Roadmap to Renewables' (2017) Northern Territory Government.

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