

Submission to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee inquiry into the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025

By Beryl Brugmans

The Committee is to inquire into and report on:

- (i) whether the Assembly should pass the Bill;
- (ii) whether the Assembly should amend the Bill;
- (iii) whether the Bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals; and
- (iv) whether the Bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament.

I wish to submit the following arguments **against** the passing of the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025.

The only circumstance under which the Bill should be “amended” is if it reinstates the rights of NT citizens to have a say in how the NT is governed during any political party’s tenure in government.

At this point Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 is designed to eliminate the rights and liberties of individuals. There is a paucity of avenues for input from any other than those who are “registered” and “Aboriginal” under various existing Acts.

If the “powers” that the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 is clear in giving to the Chief Minister and the Territory Controller allows them to prevent public participation in the governing of the Northern Territory, we are well and truly on our way to the active and purposeful suppression of democracy. This could well and should be challenged by Article 21 of the UN Charter of Human Rights.

I understand Queensland has a ‘Coordinator’ of sorts. This position is not legislated, nor does it give such wide-ranging powers to just two people. The NT can not afford to allow the actions of just a couple of people to decide the fate of so many thousands, and the liveability for all life within its borders.

Those of us who have lived in the NT for longer than 30 years are well aware of the many reasons for not trusting commercial interests' involvement in 'development'. We simply cannot and should not continue to tolerate the continuous stream of 'cowboys' who complain about limitations on their profiteering because of the "idealistic" attempts to protect the Northern Territory's ability to support future generations. We do not need laws that ensure the Northern Territory becomes a wasteland.

Without a Senate, the Northern Territory has been lacking the checks and balances enjoyed by the States. This situation has not been to the NT's benefit. The Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 denies the ability for even the Opposition Members in Parliament to attempt to balance the excessive powers inherent in the Bill. The Rule of Law, in this case, is blatantly undemocratic, and serves none but those in the business of exploiting the Northern Territory's future for gains on the stock market.

The Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 is the worst kind of legislations as it does not benefit most of the Northern Territory populace nor it's natural environment, including water sources. I urge the Legislative Scrutiny Committee to reject the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 outright as a dangerous law that denies all but two Territorians the right to make decisions on the future of the Northern Territory.