

From: [Caitlin McGuire](#)
To: [Tanzil Rahman](#); [LA Committees](#)
Subject: Territory Coordinator bill
Date: Tuesday, 18 February 2025 3:50:48 PM

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Dear LA Scrutiny Committee & Mr Rahman

Please find attached my submission to the Territory Coordinator bill 2025 consultation.

It is copied below for you ease of reference:

18.02.25

Dear Scrutiny Committee of the Northern Parliament,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the Territory Coordinator Act as a fundamental attack on our Democracy in the Territory and I urge the Scrutiny committee to recommend it is not passed.

My name is Caitlin, I am one of the many young GP registrar doctors who work in Darwin and have chosen to settle in the Territory where I work to promote good health and to safeguard my patients.

For this reason I feel I must appeal to you in order to advocate not just for myself as a Territorian but for my patients, the NT residents who you represent.

Our way of life is under threat with this proposal. Although we want to develop and be economically viable, this should never be at the cost of our democracy or the things that make the Territory an incredible place to live. I'm concerned that these changes to the structure of government will be irreversible, and that this power taken from the elected representatives will be very difficult to ever take back again.

These changes threaten your relevance, and your job as MLAs. It should not be possible for the Chief Minister to choose to bypass any concerns raised by all members of parliament and the public.

I am deeply concerned by the creation of the Territory Coordinator- an unelected bureaucrat who will have powers above those of democratically elected MLAs. The people have not had any opportunity to vote on this and many are not aware of this new shortcut to power where so many important decisions can be made by an unelected minority.

Particularly with rising threats to democracy globally, people living and working in the NT, myself included, are concerned that our government is trying to sidestep the democratic process to make decisions without any scrutiny or protective process. Frankly I think this system will be vulnerable to corruption. As an inhabitant of the NT I do not think that we want or deserve such a system to be implemented.

Personally, in this bill, I am particularly worried about:

- The side-stepping powers of the Coordinator to make decisions for Government departments or ministers. This is highly inappropriate. Government departments and ministers have much specific and specialised knowledge which helps them to make a decision. I do not think unelected non-specialists should be able to override these well-considered decisions.

- Powers to access land: If Territorians were aware that it would be possible for people to access their private land, bring machinery and install equipment without a warrant or the permission of the land owner, many people, including myself, would not want to invest in property in the NT. Why would you put your savings into buying land that the government could then intervene on with no notice?

I've become worried in particular as I've been told that given the Land Title Act 2011 is included in the acts, with exemption powers under the Territory Coordinator, but note it's relevance to the Pastoral Land Act 1992, the Heritage Act 2011, the Environmental Protection Act 2019, the Water Act 1992, The Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 as well as many other acts. Please explain why this is necessary.

- Protection from Liability: I would like it explained why "A person is not civilly or criminally liable for an act done or omitted to be done by the person in good faith in the exercise of a power or performance of a function as: (a) the Territory Coordinator; or (b) a member of the Coordinator's staff; or (c) any other person acting for or on behalf of the Coordinator." (section 104-1). Governments and bureaucrats should be accountable to us, the public, and also the judiciary. Declaring themselves exempt from liability gives them a free pass to use their extraordinary powers with no oversight or repercussions. I am accountable for all of my professional choices at work, I don't understand why the government that represents me is not.

All modern governments should have proper oversight, and accountability to the people - therefore removing that makes this government a farce. This government is focused on taking shortcuts and consolidating their power. We must agree that invalidating the role of MLAs and community voices through this proposal is disrespectful to the voting public and negatively impacts the present and future inhabitants of the NT.

This bill is extremely concerning as it undermines the democratic process, reduces the value of living in the NT, and all seems designed to take power and safety away from the public and their representatives and into the hands of the Chief Minister. Please consider the voices of myself and the many Territorians who believe this marks a terrifying authoritarian turn for our Government.

Sincerely,
Dr Caitlin McGuire

