

Introduction

Nhulunbuy Corporation welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission in support of the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025.

As the town of Nhulunbuy prepares to transition from a mining-dependent economy to a regional service hub following Rio Tinto's cessation of mining operations, we recognise the critical role this Bill can play in fostering economic diversification, investment, and sustainable development for the Gove Peninsula.

Nhulunbuy Corporation functions are akin to a local regional council, providing essential municipal services to the town of Nhulunbuy, its Industrial Estate, and Gove Airport. With a dedicated team of 30 full-time employees across Finance, Aviation and Compliance, Infrastructure, and Community Engagement divisions, we deliver high-quality services to enhance the quality of life for residents and support the town's ongoing development.

Our responsibilities range from maintaining parks and gardens, managing building and development applications, through to enforcement of by-laws and administering utility billing on behalf of the mining company. Through these efforts, we aim to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of our community.

We support the establishment of the Territory Coordinator, recognising its potential to streamline regulatory processes, facilitate investment, and coordinate development efforts that will enable our community to thrive in the post-mining era.

This submission outlines our key areas of support and recommendations to maximise the Bill's impact.

Support for the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025

1. Establishing a Coordinated Approach to Economic Transition

The Bill's provisions for designating significant projects and Territory Development Areas (TDA) are particularly relevant to Nhulunbuy's transition. By enabling the Territory Coordinator to consolidate regulatory processes and coordinate infrastructure planning, the Bill aligns with our objective to establish a sustainable post-mining economy.

Nhulunbuy Corporation supports:

- The Minister's ability to designate significant projects and TDAs to prioritise economic development initiatives in transitioning regions.
- The Territory Coordinator's role in facilitating case management for proponents engaging with government agencies.
- The emphasis on multi-agency collaboration to expedite approvals and infrastructure coordination.

2. Enhancing Investment Confidence and Project Delivery

A key barrier to regional economic growth is the complexity of regulatory approvals. The Bill's mechanism for step-in powers, prioritisation requests, and program of works approvals provides certainty for investors considering development in the Gove Peninsula.

Nhulunbuy Corporation supports:

- The power of the Minister and Territory Coordinator to issue prioritization and progression-related requests to regulatory agencies to accelerate project approvals.
- The ability to approve a program of works that consolidates infrastructure development into a streamlined, strategic framework.
- The creation of Infrastructure Coordination Areas (ICA) to ensure essential infrastructure is planned and delivered efficiently.

3. Supporting Regional Infrastructure and Industry Development

Nhulunbuy's transition to a regional service hub requires significant infrastructure investment. The Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 provides a framework for facilitating coordinated infrastructure development, ensuring essential services such as energy, transport, and communications are efficiently planned and delivered.

Nhulunbuy Corporation supports:

- The Territory Coordinator's role in coordinating infrastructure projects that enable economic diversification, such as renewable energy initiatives, improved port facilities, and digital connectivity.
- The provision for Territory Development Areas (TDA) to support planned industry clusters and regional economic hubs.
- The Bill's alignment with strategic planning to attract diverse investment into tourism, aquaculture, and advanced manufacturing.

Recommendations for Maximising the Bill's Effectiveness

While Nhulunbuy Corporation strongly supports the Bill, we recommend the following refinements to ensure its successful implementation:

1. Clear Designation Criteria for Significant Projects and TDAs:
 - Establish transparent and inclusive criteria for the designation of significant projects and TDAs to ensure regional communities like Nhulunbuy can fully leverage these mechanisms.

2. Dedicated Regional Economic Transition Strategies:
 - Incorporate specific provisions for economic transition regions such as Nhulunbuy, including tailored infrastructure funding mechanisms and incentives for private sector investment.
3. Enhanced Community and Indigenous Engagement:
 - Strengthen requirements for consultation with local councils, Traditional Owners, and regional stakeholders to ensure development aligns with community aspirations.
4. Priority for Essential Services Infrastructure:
 - Ensure that infrastructure planning under the Bill prioritises critical services such as housing, health facilities, and workforce accommodation to support economic growth in the regions.

Conclusion

Nhulunbuy Corporation is committed to working collaboratively with the Northern Territory Government to implement a successful economic transition for our community.

The Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 represents a critical step in ensuring that our region receives the support needed to attract investment, develop infrastructure, and build a sustainable post-mining economy.

We urge the Legislative Assembly to pass this Bill and consider our recommendations to strengthen its effectiveness for regional communities like Nhulunbuy. We welcome further engagement and look forward to seeing the benefits of this initiative materialise for the future of the Gove Peninsula.