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**To:** [LA Committees](#)  
**Cc:** [LA Committees](#); [Electorate Johnston](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to Scrutiny Committee Regarding the Territory Coordinator  
**Date:** Wednesday, 19 February 2025 7:19:10 AM

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Dear Scrutiny Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to the formation of the 'Office of the Territory Coordinator' and its ability to circumvent regulatory processes, balances and checks designed to ensure projects serve the best interests of Territorians.

Firstly, I am concerned that a position proposed to hold the power to sidestep thirty two Acts was appointed to an interim TC, with no prior community consultation. Such powers, should not sit solely in the hands of the TC or the CM. It is deeply concerning that the public was only made aware of these changes after a document was leaked about the proposal. The community consultations now being held, were only organised due to community pressure and are being held over the Christmas period, when many people are unable to attend these last minute sessions. Furthermore, these changes could enable industry to access land owned by First Nations or other under-represented groups, who have not been consulted or supported to make submissions.

There is already a severe lack of transparency surrounding the influence of the resources industry in politics, and the nomination of a non-elected bureaucrat and a former INPEX GM raises concerns that large scale resource companies are set to benefit from this legislation, which centralises power, erodes democratic processes and enables people with no expertise to circumvent the EPA, experts and delegated processes. I believe the nomination of the TC represents a conflict of interest and this man (or the CM) is not appropriately qualified to scrutinise the impacts of these projects on behalf of Territorians.

When you speak to small and medium business owners in the Territory, you often hear of the drawn out processes they must go through in order to conduct their operations. I don't believe it is fair that large resource organisations, who employ FIFO workers from interstate, pay insufficient taxes, receive government bailouts, damage the environment, take their income out of the Territory and seed misinformation are being green lighted to avoid doing this same work. They do not contribute to the long term N.T economy and are not part of the NT community in the way that local, small to medium businesses are. A genuine long term business management strategy is required, that supports local businesses to grow, and supports a circular economy, rather than giving free reign to companies that will up and leave when the resource runs out.

Furthermore, the 'Primary Principle' as established by the legislation is vague, setting the false pretense for 'economic prosperity', over the health of Territorians, culture and the environment. As the TC and CM are not experts in these areas, circumventing independent checks and balances could have unintended, negative consequences for people and the economy, derailing progress and causing significant financial, cultural and environmental harm. Furthermore, the general public and small to medium sized business have rarely seen the economic benefits of large scale resource, agribusiness and development projects. Prices of everything have continued to rise, while the quality of services has declined. The public is right to be sceptical about who will actually benefit from these fast tracked projects, as history has shown us that it is not everyday Territorians who benefit, but it is everyday Territorians who will have to pay to mop up the mess they leave.

Regulatory processes in the N.T are already under-resourced and poorly supported with weak

laws, impacting their ability to make informed, independent decisions about what is best for the N.T community, economy and environment. Project proponents already have to do so little to gain access to resources and do so little to support communities or rehabilitate impacted environments, that is unthinkable that the CM, TC and corporations are working to side step these minimal processes altogether. Even more concerning, is the apparent positioning of the Office of the Territory Coordinator to lock communities out of engagement and consultation processes for projects that may impact them greatly, leaving communities little ability to fight for what matters to them.

The TC or CM should not be able to override laws and regulations pertaining to Acts such as the Nuclear Waste Transport, Storage and Disposal (Prohibition) Act 2004, when projects relating to controversial matters should absolutely be open to community consultation and scrutiny. Territory communities have fought hard against projects of this nature and the idea that this Office could strip them of their legal pathways to argue against these and other detrimental projects is undemocratic. It seems that the thirty two Acts that the TC will have the power to override represents a significant risk not only to the environment, but to private land access, workers rights and OHS, urban planning and more. This an over reach of power and it is inappropriate for the CM and TC to hold this power without opportunity for public scrutiny.

Erosion of democratic process and the disempowerment of independent regulators and experts is not the pathway to a healthy and prosperous Northern Territory.

Kind regards,

Erica Smith.