

WATER MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS BILL 2019
Protect NT Inc Submission

Dear Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee,

Protect NT Incorporated has over 400 members. Our purpose is to protect the Northern Territory's land, water, climate and lifestyle.

We support the bulk of the Water Miscellaneous Amendments Bill, with only clauses 5 and 12 causing concern. These concerns and our recommendations are described below:

Clause 5. Section 71B amended (Notice of intention to make a water extraction licence decision)

(1) Section 71B(2) omit in a newspaper circulating throughout the Territory and may also publish the notice

Notices must continue to be published in a Territory-wide paper such as the NT News, as well as local papers to ensure they are seen. Notices must also be provided online with more information than is currently provided in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Water Licensing Portal found at: <https://denr.nt.gov.au/land-resource-management/water/permits-and-licences/water-licensing-portal>

(2) Section 71B(6) omit and occupiers

(3) After section 71B(6) insert (7) In addition, the Controller must: (a) use reasonable efforts to identify any occupiers of land immediately adjacent to the land mentioned in subsection (6)(a) and (b); and (b) give a copy of the notice to the identified occupiers.

We have concerns as to the definition of "use reasonable efforts to identify any occupiers". As this amendment is subjective, we request that Section 71B(6) remain unchanged and the proposed Section 71B(7) not be inserted.

The current 71B(6) states, "The Controller must give a copy of the notice to the owners and occupiers of land immediately adjacent to: (a) the land from which the water will be taken; and (b) the land on which the water will be used."

Clause 12. Regulations 12 and 13 replaced

While we welcome the insertion of the amended Regulation 12 "Functions of Drillers' Qualifications Advisory Committee" (renaming the current Regulation 13, Regulation 12), we recommend that the current Regulation 12 "Drillers' Qualifications Advisory Committee" remain and be renamed Regulation 13. This keeps the Drillers' Qualifications Advisory Committee in line with other advisory committees which are constituted by 2 experts, 2 operators, 2 consumers, and 2 unrelated individuals who provide the general public's layman view. The proposed amended Regulation 13 is confusing with its Regulation 13(2) contradicting Regulation 13(3).

Protect NT Incorporated appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Water Miscellaneous Amendments Bill 2019.

Yours Sincerely,

Pauline Cass
for Protect NT Inc.