

Dear Scrutiny Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Territory Coordinator Bill and to share the significant fears I have about this Government's misrepresentation of the consultation that occurred in the lead up to this Bill being drafted.

This Bill should not pass through Parliament. The Territory Coordinator role is not in the best interests of the Northern Territory and wider Australian community. It is only in the best interest of private companies which do provide any real benefit to communities. This Bill does not have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals - the community wants to see healthy people and environments with there being significant risks to this through the Territory coordinator. This Bill states its purpose is 'to expedite certain statutory processes and decisions and for related purposes' however, these processes are in place for a reason - to prevent harm being done to communities and ensuring that developments are actually appropriate. It is very concerning that the Territory Coordinator must make decisions predominately through the objective of 'driving economic development for the Territory or a region of the Territory'. Many harmful things such as the tobacco industry and yet we have tight regulations around it due the significant harms. We need strict rules around development to ensure communities do not pay the price for economic growth.

The Bill does not have sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament. The Territory Coordinator is an unelected person with powers surpassing most members of the Legislative Assembly. As Mussolini himself said "fascism should more appropriately be called Corporatism because it is a merger of state and corporate power." This is a very concerning move towards a fascist state, with the powers of government being centralised for the purposes of increasing corporations profit and power. The powers of the Territory Coordinator far exceeds those of the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment himself. It is also concerning that the Territory Coordinator would not be accountable to Parliament or seemingly anyone other than the Chief Minister. These wide ranging powers also cover a vast array of topics including planning law, building regulation, environmental protection, water extraction, mining and petroleum, the handling and storage of nuclear waste, water and sewerage services and land acquisition - this is too much power for one person, let alone an unelected one! With the Territory Coordinator not a member of the legislative assembly they do not have the same responsibility to constituents and will not be engaging with members of the community in order to give them an important grounding in the reality of this Bill's impacts on everyday people. There is not enough transparency and accountability!

This lack of transparency also is relevant to the failure of the Government to engage in any genuine consultation with the community and the failure to be honest about the large number of submissions made by community members in opposition to this Bill! The Chief Minister stated that 'by the end of the consultation period, 321 participants had attended six Community Information Forums across the Territory, 559 written submissions had been received, and 89 meetings were held with 267 individuals representing various sectors' and yet there was no transparency in reporting that these submissions were largely in opposition to the Bill and many of these so called meetings were with industry and corporation bodies.

You should not allow this gross misuse of Government power to proceed. It is an inappropriate placement of significant powers into the hands of this unelected, unsuitable person and fails to provide any genuine transparency to community members.

Sincerely,

Eliza Palmer