

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ntepa.epa](#)
Cc: [Das NTG](#)
Subject: Project Ares submission - referral and draft Terms of Reference
Date: Thursday, 13 August 2026 9:38:54 PM

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As a Territory resident based in Darwin, NT, I am writing to formally object to the proposed Project Ares data centre and gas-fired power station at Murrarji Station. I have lived and worked in the Barkly region and have personally visited Lake Woods. I have seen firsthand the abundance of birdlife, native animals and plant life that exists in this environment. It is an area of significant ecological value that deserves to be protected.

The potential environmental impacts of this project should concern not only Territorians, but people across Australia. Development that risks damaging fragile ecosystems and impacting Aboriginal land for corporate gain and profit must be carefully questioned.

We need to do better as a society. Economic development and corporate profit should not come at the expense of our natural environment, biodiversity, cultural heritage and the long-term health of our ecosystems.

Once this environment is damaged, some of its ecological and cultural values may be impossible to restore. The long-term wellbeing of the Territory and future generations must carry greater weight than short-term financial gain.

I strongly urge the relevant decision-makers to consider the environmental, cultural and long-term consequences of Project Ares and to reject the proposed development.

The project's creeks drain about 80 km to Lake Woods, a nationally important wetland that fills with up to 116,000 waterbirds. The referral admits the connection but has not assessed the downstream effect. I object unless the NT EPA requires assessment of the project's impacts on Lake Woods and the creeks that feed it.

Project Ares would run on a gas plant of about 1,000 MW, bigger than the Territory's main power station, yet the referral will not say where the gas comes from. In this region, new gas means fracked Beetaloo shale gas. The project should not proceed until the NT EPA requires that the source of the gas be disclosed and its full lifecycle emissions assessed, including the upstream fracking.

Threatened wildlife, including the Greater Bilby, has already been recorded here, and other listed species are likely present. The proponent has relied largely on desktop review rather than looking properly on the ground. This must not be approved until the NT EPA requires field surveys for these threatened species across the whole project footprint before any decision on impacts.

Up to 4 billion litres a year would be drawn from the Cambrian Limestone

Aquifer for this one project, a large share of the region's allocation, on top of the demands of cotton, petroleum and a co-located ammonia plant on the same water. I object unless the NT EPA requires a full, cumulative assessment of whether this level of groundwater extraction is sustainable before any approval.

Assessing the data centre on its own hides its true footprint: it relies on a gas pipeline and is tied to a neighbouring ammonia project, and splitting these apart understates the combined impact. I oppose this unless the NT EPA requires that the whole project and its connected parts, including the gas pipeline and the ammonia plant, be assessed together rather than piece by piece.

So far the environmental work is mostly desk research, done without surveying the creek lines or the country downstream in the seasons when it matters. I object unless the NT EPA requires field surveys across the full project footprint, in appropriate seasons, before the scope and level of assessment are locked in.

The project can clear or disturb up to 19,150 hectares, an area roughly 14 km across. I oppose this unless the NT EPA requires that the assessment be carried out against the full maximum footprint, with any later reduction made a binding condition of approval rather than an assumption.

The project is on land under a determined native title and rich in cultural heritage, yet consultation has barely begun. The project should not proceed until the NT EPA requires that cultural heritage assessment be led with Traditional Owners through the Northern Land Council, properly resourced, and not rushed by a streamlined timeline.

I do not believe this project should be approved until these matters are fully and independently assessed. I call on the NT EPA to require them in the Terms of Reference before any decision is made. Thank you for considering my submission.

Mary Kerr
Darwin NT