

09 Feb 2026

Submission: Ichthys Carbon Capture and Storage Project

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on this referral.

My name is Melissa Ball, and I live in Fannie Bay.

I am writing to you to share my strong belief that this project should not proceed with respect to the potential ramifications for biodiversity and human health, which I will expand upon below.

My connection to this issue is that I am a proud Territory resident and member of Birdlife with a vested interest in the preservation of Migratory Shorebird habitat and the health of the local population. I moved to Darwin in December 2023 and have been actively involved in shorebird monitoring in the last twelve months, participating in monthly shorebird counts at significant shorebird habitats surrounding Darwin.

My primary concerns regarding the contents of this referral are in relation to:

Impact of the project on migratory shorebirds.

In accordance with the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, the threshold of significant impacts on migratory shorebirds includes:

- The loss of important habitat resulting in a reduction in the capacity of the habitat to support migratory shorebirds.
- Degradation of habitat leading to a substantial reduction in migratory shorebird numbers.
- Increased disturbance leading to a substantial reduction in migratory shorebird numbers; and
- Direct mortality of birds leading to a substantial reduction in migratory shorebird numbers.

According to the INPEX referral, Ichthys Carbon Capture and Storage Project has a projected area extending over 250 km. This includes an onshore development area encompassing Darwin Harbour and a dredge disposal ground located 12 km north -west of Lee Point. The referral also outlines a host of infrastructure and dredging activities that would occur at these locations.

It is simply not reasonable to expect these activities will have minimal disturbance to 'potentially environmentally sensitive areas', as per INPEX referral. The fact is, Darwin Harbour is and Lee Point, *in their entirety*, are ecologically sensitive and culturally significant areas with especial reference to the Far Eastern Curlew

Lee Point is internationally renowned as a significant site, crucial to the survival of the critically endangered migratory Far Eastern Curlew. Darwin Harbour is also recognised as an important as a non-breeding habitat for the Curlew. With a reported 80% population decline of this species in the last 40 years due to habitat loss, it is simply irresponsible and unacceptable to consider a project that will directly impact this area.

The health impacts of the project to local communities.

I note in page 168 of the INPEX referral report, the project lists activities with the potential to impact air quality, if not managed properly, including but not limited to hydrogen combustion and operational venting of carbon dioxide.

The potential impacts, during both the construction and operations phase include the release of volatile organics compounds from venting; temporary and localised reduction in ambient air quality due to dust and particulate matter and unplanned leakage of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere which would contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

This is deeply concerning to me with respect to the following:

- There is a high prevalence of poor respiratory health among Indigenous Australian children/young adults in the Northern Territory that is substantiated in the literature, rendering our local population especially susceptible to complications arising from *any* reduction in air quality (Blake, Chang and Marchant et al., 2020).
- Volatile compounds including hydrogen sulfide, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes are known carcinogens, and this has been firmly established in scientific research (Wang, Li and Qiu et al., 2021).
- I have a complete lack of confidence in INPEX to appropriately manage the project both during construction and operational phases to ensure activities do not have a deleterious impact on health quality with especial reference to their admission of *gross* underreporting of several emissions in the 2023-24 financial year at the Ichthys onshore gas processing facility. The location of this facility near Darwin City, and INPEX's negligence, does not grant them a social licence to be proposing a project with potential health ramifications of a vulnerable populace.

Thank you again for receiving public commentary on this project. I would recommend strongly that this project did not proceed however, at the very least requires additional oversight and more thorough assessment.

Yours sincerely,
Melissa Ball

Reference:

Blake, T.L., Chang, A.B., Marchant, J.M. and McElrea, M.S. (2020), Respiratory health profile of Indigenous Australian children and young adults. *J Paediatr Child Health*, 56: 1066-1071. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jpc.14817>

Wang, Y., Li, L., Qiu, Z., Yang, K., Han, Y., Chai, F., Li, P., & Wang, Y. (2021). Trace volatile compounds in the air of domestic waste landfill site: Identification, olfactory effect and cancer risk. *Chemosphere (Oxford)*, 272, Article 129582. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chemosphere.2021.129582>

I recommend that (The Minister reject this version of the proposed Referral unless.../ that the referral requires more information for a decision to be made / that the Referral clearly has an unacceptable risk to human health therefore it should be rejected).

Yours sincerely, Your name

1. Thank the NT EPA for opening up public comment on the project
2. Make the letter personalised with information about where you're from, what kind of work you do or why you're concerned about this project.
3. Introduce your arguments regarding the Referral.
4. Offer your suggestions on next steps for the referral, ie; amend the referral to include more information.

Possible recommendations / asks:

- That more information needs to be supplied for a Referral decision to be made.