

From: 
To: [ntepa.epa](#)
Cc: [Das.NTG](#)
Subject: Project Ares submission - referral and draft Terms of Reference
Date: Thursday, 13 August 2026 10:19:44 AM

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As a Territory resident, based in Darwin, NT, I am writing to object to the proposed Project Ares data centre and gas power station at Murrniji Station.

My family relies on bore water and natural resources to live. If large corporations continue to mismanage the land and waterways and continue to choose profit over sustainability they risk the longevity and safety of the population.

Lake Woods lies downstream of this project, in the same catchment, and supports enormous numbers of waterbirds and migratory shorebirds. Nothing in the referral examines what the project's runoff and creek crossings would do to it. The project should not proceed until the NT EPA requires assessment of the project's impacts on Lake Woods and the creeks that feed it.

A gas power station of around 1,000 MW would be built to run this data centre, larger than the Territory's biggest existing station. Where its gas would come from is left unstated, but in this part of the NT that means fracking the Beetaloo. I oppose this unless the NT EPA requires that the source of the gas be disclosed and its full lifecycle emissions assessed, including the upstream fracking.

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. This must not be approved until the NT EPA requires a full, cumulative assessment of whether this level of groundwater extraction is sustainable before any approval.

The project depends on an off-site gas pipeline and shares water and infrastructure with a separate ammonia project, yet these are being treated as separate matters. The project should not be signed off until 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.

The studies supporting the referral are largely desktop-based and leave the creek corridors and downstream areas unsurveyed. This must not be approved until 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 object 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.

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.

Laila Bennett
Darwin, NT