

7 May 2021

Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security  
Northern Territory Government  
GPO Box 3675  
DARWIN NT 0801

Re: Referral – Jabiru Power Station

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to you in support of the Jabiru Power Station proposal.

Kakadu is a major drawcard for tourism to Australia and the Northern Territory. Each year more than 190,000 people come from all over the world to experience the natural and cultural wonders of the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park. The *Kakadu Tourism Master Plan 2020-2030* outlines growth targets in visitor numbers upwards of 20,000 over the two five year periods, with the 2025 target set for 220,000. Investment in visitor experiences and infrastructure in the township of Jabiru is fundamental to achieving growth targets outlined in the Master Plan and sustainable tourism in Kakadu. As noted in the proponent's application, the project aligns with the outcomes of the 10 year strategy to increase visitation, build on the number of Aboriginal-led experiences and business, as well as commercial tourism businesses in Kakadu, and increase revenue from tourism.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to the ongoing delivery of essential services in Jabiru, under the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 14 August 2019. Tourism NT endorses the proponent's application to construct and operate the new hybrid Jabiru power station which will deliver new energy generation and support upgrades currently underway to improve the Jabiru electricity network. The proposal will support Jabiru's role as a service hub to Aboriginal communities located in Kakadu National Park and the neighbouring Arnhem Land region. Once operational, the project will provide residents with greater access to health and medical services, air travel and freight of food items from the Jabiru township.

The introduction of hybrid renewable energy to the region will benefit both existing and future tourism target markets, and is integral to securing the future of the town as a major tourism hub. The Jabiru Power Station will ensure a consistent and reliable power source for tourism operators based in Jabiru, and instil traveller confidence with improved business operations.

The development of the power station aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Territory Economic Reconstruction Committee's (TERC) final report; a whole-of-Territory roadmap to ensure our economic rebound. TERC also identifies regional growth, and Aboriginal economic development and empowerment, as key to the Territory's future success. The proposal will significantly deliver in these areas

and create employment opportunities for Bininj/Mungguy, while increasing visitor experience in the region.

The project is central to attracting new private sector investment in Kakadu's infrastructure, including the World Heritage Visitor Centre (a key TERC recommendation and aligned to the outcomes of the *NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030*). The production of renewable energy in the region will support the development of new tourism experiences that are viable, sustainable and complementary to existing offerings in Kakadu, and appeal to the increasing number of travellers seeking sustainable tourism operations and experiences. In addition, the project will support the re-development and growth of existing tourism infrastructure, including the Jabiru Airport.

Consumer research indicates that history and cultural experiences are amongst the most popular to international visitors, with demand for cultural tourism experiences increasing. As we work to rebound from the global COVID-19 pandemic as a strong and competitive tourism industry, the proposed venture will benefit both existing and future target markets and is integral to securing the future of the town as a major tourism hub.

Aboriginal tourism has been identified as a key priority for our tourism industry, which is reflected in the *NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030*. Our commitment to strengthen and showcase the Northern Territory's distinctive Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences is outlined as a priority objective over the next ten years. Developed in consultation with Aboriginal people and organisations, the wider tourism industry and NT Government agencies, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020-2030* identifies increasing numbers of visitors to the Northern Territory have expressed a desire to learn more about Aboriginal cultures. Likewise, many Aboriginal communities are interested in sharing their vibrant cultures through authentic experiences.

Tourism NT acknowledges the strength of the proposal to deliver the essential infrastructure required to secure Jabiru's future as a major tourism hub, while supporting economic and employment opportunities in the region. The proposal identifies minimal transport impacts to the township of Jabiru, with the proposed transport route of equipment and machinery to bypass the site and remain within the zoned industrial area. It is also noted that local traffic is not expected to increase or congest roads during both peak and low tourism seasons.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Hopper  
Deputy CEO, Tourism NT