

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ntepa.epa](#)
Cc: [Das.NTG](#)
Subject: Project Ares submission - referral and draft Terms of Reference
Date: Tuesday, 18 August 2026 4:36:50 PM

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Dear whom it may concern,

As a visitor to the Territory, I am making this submission about the proposed Project Ares data centre and gas power station at Murranji Station.

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 NT EPA should require 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 ask the NT EPA to require 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. The NT EPA should require field surveys for these threatened species across the whole project footprint before any decision on impacts.

The project would take up to 4 billion litres of groundwater a year from the Cambrian Limestone Aquifer, about 30% of the water the regional plan makes available to all industry, while other users draw on the same system. The Terms of Reference should require 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. I ask that the NT EPA require 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. The Terms of Reference should require 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 ask that the NT EPA require 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 Terms of Reference should require that cultural heritage assessment be led with Traditional Owners through the Northern Land Council, properly resourced, and not rushed by a streamlined timeline.

I ask the NT EPA to ensure these matters are required in the Terms of Reference and assessed in full before any decision is made. Thank you for considering my submission.

Leanne McGowan