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Subject: Project Ares submission - referral and draft Terms of Reference
Date: Thursday, 6 August 2026 12:51:12 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

As a long-term Territorian, I am making this submission about the proposed Project Ares data centre and gas power station at Murrarji 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. Lake Woods meets the criteria of being a Wetland of International Importance according to NT Government's own reporting: <https://territorystories.nt.gov.au/10070/532083>. The NT EPA should require 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. Fracking, we know, has innumerable inherent environmental risks and is an industry requiring heavy government subsidies. 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.

This is determined native title country with significant cultural heritage, and the engagement needed to understand it has hardly started. We've seen the time and money wasted when Native Title holders are not considered adequately with the High Court this week overturning the Singleton Water Licence. The NT EPA 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 feel it is irresponsible to clear land, use fracked gas and jeopardise a wetland of International Significance in a rush to be part of the AI bubble which is yet to be shown to have economic substance or sustainability and thus I ask the NT EPA to ensure the above matters are required in the Terms of Reference and assessed in full before any decision is made. Thank you for considering my submission.

Greg Dickson

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