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Sent: Tuesday, 21 July 2026 12:12 PM
To: ntepa epa <ntepa.epa@nt.gov.au>
Cc: Das NTG <Das.NTG@nt.gov.au>
Subject: Project Ares submission - referral and draft Terms of Reference

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Hello EPA,

As a citizen concerned for our environment and community I make this submission about the proposed Project Ares data centre and gas power station.

The development of AI is not a necessity for our society and in contrast represents major risks across several areas, climatic, social and psychological, and existential among others. It could not be further from being a reason to do this degree of damage to our already rapaciously exploited fragile Australian environment let alone the planet through more burning of fossil fuels and consequent global heating with all the deaths and illnesses and many other adverse effects science says this will bring.

The project's creeks drain about 80 km to Lake Woods, a nationally important wetland that fills with up to 116,000 waterbirds. The referral admits the connection but has not assessed the downstream effect. I ask that the NT EPA 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. The NT EPA should require that the source of the gas be disclosed and its full lifecycle emissions assessed, including the upstream fracking.

The Greater Bilby, a Vulnerable species and an Australian icon, is confirmed on the site, and the Grey Falcon and Yellow-spotted Monitor are expected here too. Yet the surveys so far are desktop-only and cover only part of the site. I ask that the NT EPA require field surveys for these threatened species across the whole project footprint before any decision on impacts.

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. The Terms of

Reference should require a full, cumulative assessment of whether this level of groundwater extraction is sustainable before any approval.

Assessing the data centre on its own hides its true footprint: it relies on a gas pipeline and is tied to a neighbouring ammonia project, and splitting these apart understates the combined impact. I ask the NT EPA to 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. I ask that the NT EPA 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. The NT EPA should 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.

This is determined native title country with significant cultural heritage, and engagement has hardly started. The NT EPA should require that cultural heritage assessment be led with Traditional Owners through the NLC, 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.

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