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Submission content:

I have extensive concerns about the AROWs project and do not support it. My concerns are as follows: - Environmental damage to the site where water will be stored - e.g., inundation of old growth vegetation. - Extensive loss of water through evaporation of stored water - current plans indicate that water will be shallow and NT evaporation rates are annually higher than rainfall. How does NTG propose to reduce evaporation of water? Arguing that freshwater flows are a 'waste of water' and should be 'harvested' doesn't stack up if the plan will allow evaporation of significant amounts of collected water. - Saltwater intrusion - 'harvesting' of freshwater flows will obviously reduce freshwater runoff, causing saltwater intrusion further upstream and earlier in the dry season. - Reduced availability of water in wetland ecosystems which are reliant on seasonal flooding. Loss of dry season aquatic refugia and productivity hotspots, as well as reduced water quality in these areas due to a loss of wet season flushing. -Reduced connectivity between highly productive floodplains, wetlands, and the river, reducing the ability for species such as barramundi to access feeding areas. - Loss of nutrient transfer between floodplains and estuary, causing reduced productivity and therefore reduced growth and survival of coastal species, including highly valuable commercial species such as prawns, and mud crabs. - Loss of ability for euryhaline species to migrate, including largetooth sawfish (Pristis pristis). - How does NTG propose to mitigate impacts on EPBC listed threatened species, including sawfish, the Northern River Shark (Glyphis garricki) and Speartooth Shark (G. glyphis)? These species extend considerable distances upstream, including further upstream than the intake site. - How does NTG propose to protect fishes from undergoing mortality as a result of being sucked into the intake? - How will the AROWs project account for variability between wet seasons? Will water capture be reduced during wet seasons with low rainfall? Will the timing of water 'harvest' be altered yearly to ensure it only occurs during high flow? It is also extremely concerning that the pre-construction and early works are commencing before the EIS is due to be completed. The EIS is a necessary procedure and its outcomes must be considered before construction begins. It is especially concerning that the AROWs Project will be used to provide significant amounts of water to the Middle Arm (Gas Hub) Precinct, despite the majority of Territorians being against that development. Our lifestyles as NT residents are based around getting out and about in nature, fishing, camping, hiking. The AROWs project is likely to have significant impacts throughout the river and surrounding coastal waters, floodplains, and wetlands. Flow harvesting will reduce recruitment of fish species, including barramundi. Instead of creating a 'storage' unit as an alternative to our ever-increasing groundwater use, NTG should be encouraging and supporting the use of rainwater by households as a way of at least seasonally reducing groundwater reliance. The AROWs project should not go ahead, and certainly not in its current form.