

Submission by Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation Opposing the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025

To: Northern Territory Government
Secretary, Legislative Scrutiny Committee,
GPO Box 3721,
DARWIN NT 0801

From: Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation
Date: 19 February 2025

Introduction

Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC) submits this opposition to the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025. As the Traditional Owners of Darwin and its surrounding regions, we have a fundamental responsibility to protect our lands, waters, culture, and the inherent rights of our people. This submission outlines our concerns regarding the Bill's impact on Larrakia people, our country, and other First Nations peoples of the Northern Territory.

Lack of Recognition and Respect for Larrakia People

The Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 risks overriding existing governance structures, diminishing the ability of Larrakia people to make decisions about our land. The Bill does not adequately recognise Larrakia Nation as representing the Traditional Custodians of Darwin, nor does it provide mechanisms to ensure that the Larrakia people have a voice in decisions affecting our country. Any legislative framework affecting Larrakia land must be developed with our direct input, reflecting our rights under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), particularly the principles of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).

Threat to Cultural Heritage and Environmental Integrity

The Bill appears to provide sweeping powers to a Territory Coordinator, potentially fast-tracking development without proper engagement with Traditional Owners. Larrakia land holds sacred sites, cultural landscapes, and ecosystems that must be preserved for future generations. The absence of robust safeguards in the Bill threatens these cultural and environmental assets, undermining both Larrakia heritage and the broader Aboriginal cultural integrity across the Northern Territory.

Larrakia Agreement on Development in Our Country

No development should proceed on Larrakia land without formal agreement from the Larrakia people. This Bill, as drafted, does not sufficiently recognise the authority of Larrakia governance structures in decision-making. We demand that any development, planning, or coordination efforts respect Larrakia law and governance, ensuring our rightful place in determining the future of our country.

Solidarity with Other First Nations of the Northern Territory

Larrakia Nation stands in support of other First Nations peoples across the Northern Territory who may be similarly impacted by the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025. The Bill must not be used as a tool to undermine Indigenous rights and self-determination across the region. We call for proper consultation with all Aboriginal groups affected by this legislation, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights upheld.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation strongly opposes the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 in its current form. We recommend:

1. The Bill be withdrawn or significantly amended to embed clear and binding requirements for engagement with Traditional Owners, including Larrakia people.
2. The incorporation of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) principles into all aspects of the Bill to ensure Larrakia and other First Nations peoples' rights are respected.
3. Strengthened protections for sacred sites, cultural heritage and the environment, preventing any fast-tracked development that undermines Indigenous interests.
4. A genuine partnership approach where Larrakia people have authority over development on our lands, reinforcing our role as custodians and decision-makers.
5. A commitment from the Northern Territory Government to meaningful consultation with all affected First Nations groups before proceeding with any legislative changes.

The Larrakia people have always protected and cared for our country. We will continue to stand firm in ensuring that any government action upholds our rights, respects our culture, and supports our sovereignty.

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