



12 June 2019

The Secretary, Social Policy Scrutiny Committee

By email: SPSC@nt.gov.au

Submission to the Social Policy Scrutiny Committee on the Environment Protection Bill 2019

NTCOSS is a peak body for the community sector in the Northern Territory and is a voice for people affected by social and economic disadvantage and inequality. The community sector in the NT is made up of community managed, non-government, not for profit organisations which work in social and community service delivery, sector development and advocacy. The community sector plays a vital role in creating social and economic wellbeing for all Territorians and in building safe and healthy communities by providing services that enable people to access and participate in health services, education, employment, economic development, and family and community life.

Environmental degradation and destruction have a disproportionate impact on already disadvantaged and vulnerable people and communities. Low income and marginalised people and communities have the least choice and control over measures that limit environmental damage and that respond to the consequences of environmental damage and climate change.

While there are many good features of the current Environment Protection Bill, NTCOSS is concerned that it does not contain some key features that are essential for real and meaningful environmental protection. In particular, the Bill should include commitment and mechanisms to support greenhouse gas emission reduction in the NT.

Specifically:

1. Include reducing the NT's greenhouse gas emissions as an Object of the Bill and must be a mandatory consideration for every decisions-maker and authority throughout the Bill
2. The word "economy" should be deleted from the definition of Environment – including "economy" with "environment undermines other aspects of the Bill and conflicts with the overall purpose which is environmental protection.
3. Anyone affected by a decision under the Bill, including anyone who has made a submission about a proposal, should have standing to request a merits review and to seek judicial review.

NTCOSS commends the NT Government for its commitment to environmental protection however without these essential amendments, the Environment Protection Bill will may to live up to its name.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Morton', is written over a light grey background.

Wendy Morton
Executive Director
NTCOSS