



# Local Government Association of the Northern Territory

## LGANT Submission to Draft Environmental Protection Act 2019

Via email to: [environment.policy@nt.gov.au](mailto:environment.policy@nt.gov.au)

2 December 2018

### **About this submission**

LGANT appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Environmental Protection Act 2019. This submission is tendered on behalf of Northern Territory Local Governments represented by LGANT. The submission provides comments regarding the impact assessment process as well as the compliance and enforcement provisions for the Northern Territory and the implications for Local Governments.

### **Increased public involvement and transparency**

#### ***How can Regional Councils be supported as stakeholders throughout the referral process***

The increased information (eg all referrals and Environment Impact Statements) provided to the public will assist local government, and their residents, to be informed of proposed development that may impact their community.

To ensure that Regional councils can fully participate as stakeholders the NT government will need to allow adequate resources for these councils. Public submission times for development taking place in remote areas of the NT needs to reflect the restrictions on council resources to obtain proposals or notifications via the web. It is also an impost on Regional councils resources to travel to municipal areas and this must be taken into consideration when organising stakeholder meetings impacting their communities.

### **Education and training**

#### ***How can the NT government ensure adequate training is undertaken***

The obligations of local government under the new legislation needs to be made clear by the NT Government. The government must ensure adequate training materials will be distributed via appropriate media to their target audience. Training materials need to be developed taking into consideration:

- Method of delivery – written materials, workshops, etc
- Cultural beliefs
- Language
- Visual aids for printed media
- Contact details for a support person at DERN

### **Infrastructure development and planning**

Communities impacted by development requiring existing/new infrastructure should be subsidised (for existing), or wholly paid (new) for by the proponent. As such proponents need to be made responsible for the inclusion of infrastructure maintenance during the project lifetime and for a reasonable time period at the end of the project. Examples of infrastructure utilised for projects include local roads, stormwater drains, and landfill that are typically maintained by councils. Additional demands on these council resources decreases their lifespan and must be compensated for long term to ease the burden to council.

### **Other Legislation and Regulations**

Assurance is needed from the NT government that the legislation will work in with existing legislation to minimise duplication with other agencies requirements.

### **Compliance and enforcement tools**

#### ***How will compliance and enforcement be achieved***

LGANT broadly supports the introduction of regulatory tools for enforcement and compliance powers but does have some concerns especially in consideration of the challenges for council resources. The NT government will need to ensure that enforcement is adequately resourced so that councils aren't responsible for this task. It is noted that Police Officers are taken to be environmental officers for the purposes of enforcement provisions under the legislation.

Yours faithfully

Tony Tapsell

**Chief Executive Officer**