

STATEMENT OF REASONS

Section 69(1)(a) of the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act)

Environmental approval holder	Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Territory Department of Mining and Energy ABN 84 085 734 992
Environmental approval number	EP2025/041
Action	Darwin Energy Hub Establish and operate a solar generator in the Weddell Region of the Northern Territory and export solar power to the existing Channel Island-Hudson Creek transmission line supplying an additional 180-210 megawatts of solar generation and battery storage into the Darwin-Katherine electricity system.
Material considered	Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) advice received on 14 October 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Report 109; and • A draft environmental approval setting out recommended conditions. Fit and proper person advice – signed declaration.
Decision	In accordance with sections 69(1)(a) and 82(4)(a) of the EP Act, I accept the draft environmental approval, adopt the proposed conditions of the NT EPA and grant the approval.

REASONS

This Statement of Reasons has been prepared in accordance with sections 82(3) and 82(4) of the EP Act.

Overview of Action

The Department of Mining and Energy is proposing to construct and operate solar generators in the Weddell region of the Northern Territory, supplying 180-210 megawatts (MW) of solar generation and battery storage directly into the Darwin-Katherine electricity system. The action includes:

- a generation precinct (located approximately 16 km south of Palmerston) comprising:
 - 3 to 6 solar farms arranged in 30-35 MW lots
 - a substation
 - battery energy storage systems
- overhead transmission lines (OHTL) connecting the generation precinct to the existing Channel Island-Hudson Creek overhead transmission line near the Weddell Power Station on the Middle Arm Peninsula
- decommissioning and rehabilitation.

The action is projected to operate for 30 years.

Environmental context

The generation precinct is located approximately 16 km south of Palmerston (on land sections 1596, 1597, 1650, 1823 and 1892 Hundred of Ayers) on vacant crown land. The site is bordered to the east by Finn Road, to the south and west by mangrove vegetation of Darwin Harbour and to the north by vacant Crown

land. The Territory Wildlife Park and Berry Springs Nature Park are located adjacent to the south west of the precinct. The generation precinct is located within land zoned as 'future development'.

The OHTL connects the generation precinct and runs north for approximately 15 km connecting to the existing Channel Island-Hudson Creek OHTL near the Weddell Power Station on the Middle Arm Peninsula (on land sections 1575, 1596, 1598, 1605, 1631, 1658, 1816, 1820, 1821, 1892, 1958 Hundred of Ayers). The OHTL is located largely on vacant Crown land; however, it does traverse a small section of private land (land section 1958, owned by the Land Development Corporation). The OHTL is primarily within land zoned 'utilities', with a small area intercepting land zoned as 'future development'. The OHTL runs adjacent to an existing utilities corridor to the east and fringes mangroves to the west.

The proposed action lies entirely within the Darwin Coastal bioregion¹. The bioregion features extensive and diverse floodplains associated with the lower reaches of the large river systems in the area. Its vegetation is dominated by mangroves, rainforest, and other types of riparian vegetation.

The proposed action is also located within the Darwin Harbour Site of Conservation Significance, which is of international significance. Darwin Harbour supports estuarine, freshwater and terrestrial environments including large areas of tidal mudflats and one of the most diverse areas of mangroves in the NT². A Darwin Harbour Strategy for the management of the Darwin Harbour Region has been developed and priority actions and projects are being implemented.

Environmental values that require protection from the action include terrestrial environmental quality, terrestrial ecosystems, culture and heritage. The action should not prevent enhancement of the communities and the economy for the welfare and benefit of current and future generations of Territorians.

Matters considered under section 73 of the EP Act

Section 73(1) Principles of environment protection and management

In considering Part 2 (principles of environment protection and management) of the EP Act, I have considered the meaning of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and applied each of the principles of ESD. I have reviewed the NT EPA's consideration of the principles of ESD as summarised in its assessment report of the action (Assessment Report 109). I have considered and weighed all the principles of ESD in making my decision.

The NT EPA's assessment process has considered, and I have applied approval conditions, to mitigate environmental impacts associated with construction, operation and decommissioning of the action. The assessment of the proposal, the NT EPA's advice to me and consequently my decision, has been informed by public and government authority consultation processes.

I have considered and applied the hierarchies for environmental decision-making and waste management. I have given particular consideration to the application of the environmental decision-making hierarchy, and proposed measures to avoid, and then mitigate and manage potential adverse impacts on the environment. I am satisfied that through compliance with the environmental approval, the action is consistent with the ESD principles and the management hierarchies.

Section 73(1)(a) Objects of the EP Act

I have had regard to the objects of the EP Act. I note in particular that through the environmental impact assessment of the action and the granting of the environmental approval, significant adverse impacts on the Territory environment are likely to be avoided and the protection and management of the Territory environment have been promoted.

The approval of the action will allow construction and operation of the Darwin Energy Hub in the Northern Territory while maintaining environmental protection including protection of terrestrial environmental

¹ [Northern Territory Bioregions – Assessment of Key Biodiversity Values and Threat.](#)

² Harrison, L, McGuire L, Ward, S, Fisher, A, Pavey, C, Fegan, M, and Lynch B (2009). Sites of Conservation Significance – Darwin Harbour. Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport.

quality, terrestrial ecosystems, and culture and heritage, and allowing enhancement of the communities and the economy for the welfare and benefit of current and future generations of Territorians. I also note the opportunity provided to the community for involvement in the environmental impact assessment of the action.

Section 73(1)(b) Assessment report on the action

I have considered the advice of the NT EPA in Assessment Report 109 which provides the NT EPA's assessment of the potential significant impacts of the action and recommendations for avoiding, mitigating and managing those impacts. The NT EPA identified that the action has the potential to have a significant impact on environmental values, and conditions were recommended for six environmental factors: terrestrial environmental quality, terrestrial ecosystems, community and economy and culture and heritage. Assessment Report 109 states that the action is likely to meet the NT EPA's environmental objectives and can be implemented and managed in a manner that is environmentally acceptable. The NT EPA recommended an environmental approval be granted subject to implementation of the approval holder's commitments in the referral information and the recommended conditions in the draft environmental approval.

The proposed conditions of the NT EPA have been adopted in the environmental approval.

Section 73(1)(c) Fit and proper person to hold environmental approval

I have had regard to whether the approval holder is a fit and proper person to hold an environmental approval. I consider the approval holder to be a fit and proper person to hold an environmental approval.

Section 73(1)(d) Any other matters the Minister considers relevant

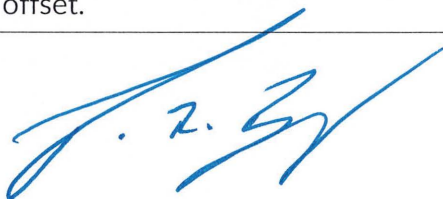
No other relevant matters have been identified.

Section 73(2) of the EP Act

Overall, having regard to the above and the materials I considered, I am satisfied that:

- the community has been consulted on the potential environmental impacts and environmental benefits of the proposed action through public consultation on the referral information and through the NT EPA's assessment of the proponent's consultation undertaken to inform the referral. Noting that ongoing consultation is required with local community stakeholders and relevant stakeholders; and;
- the significant impacts of the action have been appropriately avoided or mitigated or can be appropriately managed to acceptable levels through compliance with the environmental approval. The NT EPA's Assessment Report 109 supports this view.

No significant residual adverse impacts on the environment were identified that would require an environmental offset.



Signature

Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA

Minister for Lands, Planning and the Environment

Date: 11 - 11 - 2025
