

## **Lock the Gate NT Submission**

### **Proposed Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017.**

Director, Policy Coordination

Department of the Attorney-General and Justice

GPO Box 1722,

DARWIN NT 0801

Emailed to: [Policy.AGD@nt.gov.au](mailto:Policy.AGD@nt.gov.au)

Dear Director,

Lock the Gate Alliance NT welcomes the formation of the Northern Territory Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act and appreciates this opportunity to comment on the proposed Bill.

Lock the Gate Alliance is a national grassroots organisation made up of thousands of individuals and over 250 local groups across Australia. Our mission is to protect Australia's agricultural, environmental and cultural resources from inappropriate mining, and to educate and empower all Australians to demand sustainable solutions to food and energy production. We are committed to advocating that community health and rural industries should take priority over the development of the unconventional gas industry in Australia.

With over 80% of the Northern Territory under licence or application for onshore oil and gas exploration, Lock the Gate Alliance NT has a strong interest in ensuring Northern Territory communities and the environment are protected from corrupt or incompetent decisions, especially in the petroleum, mining, land use, water management, and natural resource sectors.

Lock the Gate Alliance NT has dozens of Territory-based community action groups within our network, with thousands of supporters across the Territory. We have conducted numerous interviews with Territorians about their suggestions for improvements needed to the process of environmental assessment decision making, compliance and legacy of resource extraction in the Territory. The most reoccurring themes included the failure of mining companies to be held responsible for long term mine site rehabilitation, inadequate environmental bonds, the lack of transparency around water use, inexperienced and under resourced compliance teams, support by government for controversial projects, failure to undertake meaningful pre-activity scientific studies, and failure to consider existing sustainable industries when approving onshore gas extraction activities. The ICAC Act would likely deter and reduce these issues occurring in the future.

Lock the Gate NT recommends the inclusion of the following processes in the ICAC Act:

- The referee or whistleblower needs to be notified of ICAC's receipt of the referral.
- The referee or whistleblower needs to be notified of the outcome of any resulting investigations or reports.
- The ability of stakeholders to appeal to the ICAC Inspector if a referral to ICAC is rejected.
- The ability to appeal ICAC recommendations to the ICAC Inspector.
- Public publication of ICAC reports.

Lock the Gate NT also advocates for the ability to investigate referrals against Commonwealth departments and bodies operating in the Northern Territory.

Lock the Gate NT hopes to be a useful resource to the ICAC. We take our role of public advocacy very seriously. Our members and supporters have empowered us to speak up strongly when the decisions of the NT Government are not fulfilling their roles for the betterment of Territorians, have breached public trust, or where there are improvements to be made.

We hope these comments are useful in your detailed and thoughtful work to investigate government corruption, and restore integrity and transparency to Government.

Lock the Gate Alliance NT looks forward to future engagement on this matter and to working together for a better outcome for a sustainable, economic and environmentally pristine Northern Territory.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Cass

On behalf of the Lock the Gate Alliance NT

Email: [pauline@lockthegate.org.au](mailto:pauline@lockthegate.org.au)