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Minister Eva Lawler MLA
Minister for the Environment, Water Security, and Climate Change GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

Application to clear pastoral land - Avago Station

I am writing to you because I am seriously concerned about the threat that this pastoral land clearing application poses to our precious Territory ecosystems and to the climate.

Protecting biodiversity is about more than just protecting already threatened species: it is essential to protect the function of the whole ecosystem. Clearing of native vegetation pushes ecosystems towards collapse by removing habitat for native species, fragmenting the remnants of the ecosystem that remain, and contributing to the spread of invasive weeds and feral animals.

Not only does pastoral land clearing directly threaten our Territory ecosystems, it indirectly threatens these ecosystems by emitting greenhouse gases that cause climate change. Land clearing makes a significant contribution to the Territory's total greenhouse gas emissions. In 2018 (the most recent data available), the category of "Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry", which includes land clearing, was approximately 35% of the Northern Territory's approximately 16 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions for that year.

This application is for an enormous area (4,116 ha) and the assessment is based on available mapping plus a cursory field verification via quad bike and helicopter assessment.

It is contemptuous of the value of the natural ecosystems that this self-assessment could possibly be considered sufficient. It shows a fundamental misalignment between to the applicant from clearing.

Accordingly:

1. In the first instance would like to register my opposition to the proposal
2. If the applicant still wishes to pursue the proposal then I would like to express my opinion that it should be subject to a rigorous environmental impact assessment.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this letter. I look forward to your response.

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Jacqueline Arnold