Jacqueline Arnold
PO Box 9124
Alice Springs
NT 0870

Pastoral Lands Board
Via 'Development Applications Online'

To the Pastoral Lands Board,

RE: Simplified Pastoral Land Clearing Application – Mount Keppler, NT Por 2850, Darwin Pastoral District, PPL 991

I am writing to request that you reject the application by Donald Bruce White, Director of Whites Pastoral Company Pty Ltd. to clear 706.6 hectares of native vegetation for the purpose of introducing pasture species.

Conflicts with the objects of the Pastoral Lands Act

The objects of the Pastoral Lands Act are:

a. to provide a form of tenure of Crown land that facilitates the sustainable use of land for pastoral purposes and the economic viability of the pastoral industry;
b. to provide for:
    i. the monitoring of pastoral land so as to detect and assess any change in its condition;
    ii. the prevention or minimisation of degradation of or other damage to the land and its indigenous plant and animal life; and
    iii. the rehabilitation of the land in cases of degradation or other damage.

This application clearly does not meet any of these purposes and therefore is outside of the Pastoral Land Board's jurisdiction.

Existing Clearing

Almost 25% of Mt Keppler has already been cleared (5388.8ha of 22,500 ha). This is enough. This lease is in the floodplain of the Adelaide River, it is inherently biodiverse and supports important ecosystem functions. Intensification of land use poses threats to water quality. It should be left alone.

Biodiversity

This is a highly biodiverse area on the floodplain of the Adelaide River. The application acknowledges that many threatened species occur in the vicinity of the proposed clearing.

Three species, the Black Footed Tree Rat the Gouldian Finch and the Northern Quoll are listed as endangered species under the EPBC Act and have been recorded in the vicinity of the application.

In particular the land proposed for clearing is suitable habitat for the Northern Quoll. The application diminishes the risk of this being encountered at the site and presents no field data to elaborate on this risk and demonstrate these species would not occur at the site, or

suitable explanation as to why the risk is “low”. This is a matter of substance. This proposal must be referred to the NT EPA.

I am strongly opposed to this application.

Regards,
[redacted]

Copies to:
Threatened Species Commissioner: Dr Fiona Fraser