



CHIEF MINISTER

Senator Nita Green
Chair
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

Via email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator 

Thank you for your letter of 3 July 2023, inviting the Northern Territory Government to make a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee in relation to its Inquiry into the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Amendment Bill 2023.

As Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, I would like to express my concern at the principle of the Bill interfering with the legislative processes of the Australian Capital Territory. In my view, it is inappropriate for the Commonwealth to place restrictions on a self-governed territory's ability to legislate on its own affairs.

The requirement to conduct an inquiry that this Bill places on the passage of a specific piece of legislation of the Australian Capital Territory is unreasonable and burdensome. I understand the Australian Capital Territory already has a range of appropriate legislative scrutiny mechanisms in place.

This proposal undermines the fundamental purpose of self-government legislation. Passage of this Bill would set a precedent that it is acceptable for the Commonwealth Parliament to place restrictions on the passage of territory legislation on the basis of a policy disagreement. It significantly erodes the rights of territory citizens in comparison to state citizens.

Furthermore, the approach of the Bill is contradictory to the principles of the Commonwealth's *Restoring Territory Rights Act 2022*, which removed restrictions preventing the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory from passing legislation that would allow voluntary assisted dying.

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I note that on this occasion, the Bill has been introduced by Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan of Queensland who has not been elected by the electors of the Australian Capital Territory.

I encourage the Committee to not support passage of this Bill.

Kind regards

NATASHA FYLES

17 JUL 2023