

'Police' calling at camps

Aboriginals claiming the land on which they are camped at Nightcliff and Knuckey's Lagoon yesterday repeated claims of "regular and annoying visits by men who claim to be police."

Spokesman for the Brinkin people at the Lagoon, and the Larrakias at Nightcliff, said the same men were visiting both camps and asking questions.

Mr Fred Waters of Knuckey's Lagoon, said there were now about 40 men, 15 women and 50 children in the camp, and his people were claiming ownership of about 20 square-miles there.

"The men who say they are from the CIB come out very often — and they mainly ask us about European people we know and who visit us," Mr Waters said.

Mr Paddy Arbuckle, also of Knuckey's Lagoon,

said "the visits are annoying."

"We are not frightened of these men, but they annoy us by coming all the time and by asking questions," he said.

Mr Bobby Secretary, leader of the Larrakias at the Nightcliff camp they call Kulaluk, said an Aboriginal woman visiting Darwin for the Catholic Church had called at his camp last week.

"The two policemen appeared soon afterwards to ask me questions about her," he said.

Mr Fred Fogarty of Kulaluk said he had several times asked the men to identify themselves.

"They always reply they are from the CIB, but do not produce any cards or other satisfactory identification," he said.

Mr Waters said the campers at Knuckey's La-

goon had several other problems.

RUBBISH

People often dumped household rubbish in the area being occupied by the Aboriginals, and men often visited the camp at night looking for women.

"We tell them to go away, but they keep coming back," he said.

"We are also worried by a couple of white men who have camped near us. We don't want them there, because it is our land."

"We are negotiating with the Welfare Branch on our claim to control the land, and we will fence it when we can get some money together," he said.

Mr Secretary said the Larrakias also hoped to fence Kulaluk, although their claims to the area had been rejected by the Government.

The Aboriginals hoped watersiders would help provide the money for fencing materials.



● Picture shows, from left, Mr Waters, Mr Fogarty, Mr Arbuckle and Mr Secretary.

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A single-page land rights newsletter, *Bunji*, first appeared on the Darwin streets in August 1971. *Bunji* was featured on the first Northern Territory ABC televised news bulletin in black and white a few days later. Amongst the Aboriginal rights movement across Australia the newsletter quickly gained fame, prompting the Queensland black activist, Cheryl Buchanan, to write to *Bunji*, inviting a Larrakia delegate to a conference against racism to be held in Brisbane in January 1972. Cheryl was sponsored by the socially progressive Australian Union of Students (AUS) and was to be involved in the first Aboriginal Embassy outside Parliament house in Canberra that began on 26th January, 1972. More than two months earlier, the Larrakia and supporters had raised their flag to claim Darwin, in particular their camp at Kulaluk behind the Nightcliff Drive-in Cinema. On July 6th, 1973, Fred Fogarty led a group from the Kulaluk camp to violently resist an attempt by surveyors to subdivide the land the group had claimed at a meeting with Judge A E Woodward, the Aboriginal Land Rights Commissioner, when he visited Kulaluk the previous month. Cheryl was in Darwin at the time of the protest and proposed that Fred fly with her to the Labor Party Conference in Surfers Paradise to put the case for land rights to Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam. Cheryl later prepared *We Have Bigger All*, financed by AUS, telling the story of the fight for land in Darwin up to the time of Fred Fogarty's committal hearing, and before the final Woodward Report was published in April 1974.

In the above historical context, Cheryl's booklet is a valuable primary reference suggesting that activism caused Judge Woodward to substantially strengthen his land rights report between the printing of his first report in 1973 and the publication of his final report in 1974, a document on which the *Land Rights Act, 1976* is based. The media often incorrectly credits land rights to leaders of a North East Arnhem Land clan. However, *We Have Bigger All* suggests that if it was not for a ragged band of Aboriginal people camped on vacant land around Darwin land rights might not be a reality in the Northern Territory today.