

Fish Camp
Kulaluk
% PO Nightcliff

13 March 1997

Diana Leeder
Manager, Community Services
Darwin City Council

Dear Ms Leeder,

We are people at Fish Camp who used to live at Lee Point. We have no toilet or shower. Sometimes we go to Nightcliff Seabreeze to use the toilets and shower or to get water. If you lock up the Nightcliff toilets you will make things hard for people like us. We ask you to please keep public toilets and showers open.

Yours sincerely

Billy cooper

DULCIE MA
Agnes Laurence

Daisy Eglind

COOPER X Tommy Yalmurr

DULCIE MALIMARA Agnes Laurence JIMMY GARDNER

George Bambuma
Maree Fry

PO Box 41104

Casuarina NT 0811

12 March 1997

The Minister for Aboriginal Development
Hon M J Palmer
Parliament House
Darwin

Dear Sir

We are people from central Arnhem Land who have lived in Darwin for a long time. We have been camping in the bush around Darwin since the NT Government told us to move from our camp in the bush at Lee Point last July. Some of us had lived there for many years without any trouble.

The people who lived at Lee Point were relations of ours from central Arnhem Land. They are camping all around Darwin, at Fish Camp, Palmerston, Waratah oval and Tiwi. None of them have houses, toilets, kitchen or showers. They live in the open like us.

We are asking your government to make a good place where we can camp where there are toilets, showers, a kitchen and laundry. There is a lot of bush near Casuarina, Lee Point and Buffalo Creek where we could make a town camp for our people. We would like to have a meeting between the government and our people about this idea.

Yours sincerely

Arano A Balma
+ Nancy Duxawanga

PO Box 41104

Casuarina NT 0811

12 March 1997
~~25 February 1997~~

The Minister for Aboriginal Development
Hon M J Palmer
Parliament House
Darwin

Dear Sir

We are people from central Arnhem Land who have lived in Darwin for a long time. For eight months we have been camping near Tiwi shops and Daisy Yarmir Hostel. Men from the NT Government told us to move from our camp in the bush near the Lee Point park last July. Some of us had lived there for at least four years without any trouble.

At Lee Point there were many people from central Arnhem Land who are relations of ours. Those people are now camped all around Darwin, at Fish Camp, Palmerston and Fannie Bay. None of them have houses, toilets or showers. They live like us.

We are asking your government to make a good place where we can camp where there are toilets, showers and laundry. There is a lot of bushland between Casuarina, Lee Point and Buffalo Creek where we could make a town camp for our people. We would like to have a meeting between the government and our people about this idea.

Yours sincerely

TOMMILIKEN

ANDY COOPER (% Daisy Yarmirr Hostel)

SANDRA COOPER

ANNETTE WILSON

EVAN MARAGUMBA

FRANK MUNGPAYUNG

ARCHIE ENGLAND

FANNY MARAHNGA

PANOTEL

DAILY

J. T. T. T.

PO Box 41104

Casuarina NT 0811

25 February 1997

**The Minister for Aboriginal Development
Hon M J Palmer
Parliament House
Darwin**

Dear Sir

We are people from Maningrida who have lived in Darwin for a long time. For eight months we have been camping under tarpaulins on Kulaluk land behind Minmarama Village. There is no water supply or sewerage where we are. Men from the NT Government told us to move from our camp in the bush near the Lee Point park last July. We had lived there for at least four years without any trouble.

At Lee Point there were many people from central Arnhem Land who are relations of ours. Those people are now camped all around Darwin, at Palmerston, Tiwi and Fannie Bay. None of them have houses, toilets or showers. They live under tarpaulins like us.

We are asking your government to make a good place where we can camp where there are toilets, showers and laundry. There is a lot of bushland between Casuarina, Lee Point and Buffalo Creek where we could make a town camp for our people. We would like to have a meeting between the government and our people about this idea.

Yours sincerely

DOLCIE MALKIMARA
G BAIN BUMMA
P. MULYANA

BILLY COOPER

+ Agnes
MARK SMITH

TIMMIS GALAMINDA

T (tommy Yalmur)

MAREE FRY
KATHI ND PEGY

PO Box 41104

Casuarina NT 0811

25 February 1997

The Minister for Aboriginal Development
Hon M J Palmer
Parliament House
Darwin

Dear Sir

We are people from Maningrida who have lived in Darwin for a long time. For eight months we have been camping under tarpaulins on Kulaluk land behind Minmarama Village. There is no water supply or sewerage where we are. Men from the NT Government told us to move from our camp in the bush near the Lee Point park last July. We had lived there for at least four years without any trouble.

At Lee Point there were many people from central Arnhem Land who are relations of ours. Those people are now camped all around Darwin, at Palmerston, Tiwi and Fannie Bay. None of them have houses, toilets or showers. They live under tarpaulins like us.

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Yours sincerely

DUNCAN DENNIS

YOLADNA ROBERTS

Poh Yambo

RANKIN JAMES

QUEENIE DUDANGA

CAROL DENNIS

RHONDA MCKENZIE

PO Box 41104

Casuarina NT 0811

12 March
25 February 1997

The Minister for Aboriginal Development
Hon M J Palmer
Parliament House
Darwin

Dear Sir

We are people from central Arnhem Land who have lived in Darwin for a long time. For eight months we have been camping under tarpaulins in the bush near Palmerston. There is no water supply or sewerage where we are. Men from the NT Government told us to move from our camp in the bush near the Lee Point park last July. Some of us had lived there for at least four years without any trouble.

At Lee Point there were many people from central Arnhem Land who are relations of ours. Those people are now camped all around Darwin, at Fish Camp, Tiwi and Fannie Bay. None of them have houses, toilets or showers. They live under tarpaulins like us.

We are asking your government to make a good place where we can camp where there are toilets, showers and laundry. There is a lot of bushland between Casuarina, Lee Point and Buffalo Creek where we could make a town camp for our people. We would like to have a meeting between the government and our people about this idea.

JILL COOPER
PAULINE MIRILMAN

MAGGIE ZITHA

Yours sincerely

BILLY W. ZITHA

CAPTAIN KOOKABURRA

G. W. COOPER JACKY BARAJALA

Barbara Cooper
Mable +

Helen James
Peter James
Peter Wanambee
PETE CLARKSON
MACE
Mag Taylor

JOHNNY BALWIDA

TOMMY MAYER

~~JOSEPH~~ JOSEPH

SANDRA STEWART
~~RONALD~~ Ronald Stewart
~~RONALD~~ RONALD FACE

PO Box 41104

Casuarina NT 0811

5 March. 1997

The Minister for Aboriginal Development
Hon M J Palmer
Parliament House
Darwin

Dear Sir

We are people from central Arnhem Land who have lived in Darwin for a long time. For eight months we have been camping near Fannie Bay.* Men from the NT Government told us to move from our camp in the bush near the Lee Point park last July. Some of us had lived there for at least four years without any trouble.

At Lee Point there were many people from central Arnhem Land who are relations of ours. Those people are now camped all around Darwin, at Fish Camp, Palmerston and Tiwi. None of them have houses, toilets or showers. They live like us.

* Waratah Oval

We are asking your government to make a good place where we can

camp where there are toilets, ^{Kitchen} showers and laundry. There is a lot of

bushland between Casuarina, Lee Point and Buffalo Creek where we

could make a town camp for our people. We would like to have a

meeting between the government and our people about this idea.

PETERM & HAGG

Yours sincerely

S. M. G. B.
W. J. F. W.

MARCELLUS G. ESE

NORMAN. WINTER. NARDIKA

GREG-DARCY

Willie F. Gandy

Marjorie Williams
Merry Darwin

The homeless in the Territory

As the desire to make Darwin into 'another Singapore' grows, land set aside for Aborigines is often repossessed. Bill Day comments.

IN a bushland clearing under the noisy flight path of the Darwin international airport, a sombre group of Aboriginal people on a fine July Saturday morning gathered around a totemic design outlined on the bare sand.

Amongst the crowd was an empty wheelchair, a poignant reminder of the dead man the people had come to remember. Few of the northern capital's 86,000 residents were aware of the age old rituals taking place within the city boundaries.

The Northern Territory media has focused on the harassment campaigns by the Darwin City Council and the Territory government to drive homeless Aborigines from the city. Although the numbers are small, Aborigines make up almost nine per cent of the city population and the movement from isolated and neglected Aboriginal communities into the towns is growing. Accommodation is scarce and there are few concessions to Aboriginal needs.

Police patrols issue on the spot fines for the crime of sleeping in a public place. To avoid the fines many Aboriginal people camp in hidden bush and beach sites, under old tarpaulins, without water or sewage and cooking on an open fire. Some walked into Darwin in the 1950s and resent being told to 'return to their country'. It was in one of these small camps, known as 'Fish Camp', that the ceremony was held. Waving bunches of ironwood leaves, Aboriginal dancers fanned smoke from a



Designs on the bare sand.

left to survive in the squatters' camps around the city. Obviously Bob Bunduwabi was a determined and strong man. (His name can now be mentioned, after a period of mourning when to name the dead is taboo). In July 1996 Bob and his extended family were forcibly evicted from their camp of huts and tents at

Showing their resilience, more of the Fish Camp people want public housing, then they returned to Lee Point last May. [should] join the queue like everyone else". One response is to ask who is this imaginary 'everyone else'? Is it the white nuclear family moving up from southern capitals, further displacing Aborigines, who are one quarter of the Territory population? And what consideration is made for Aboriginal use of space?

As property prices increase, and the desire to make Darwin into 'another Singapore' grows, land set aside for Aborigines, who are one quarter of the Territory population? And what consideration is made for Aboriginal use of space?

The worst dictatorships have hesitated to forcibly prevent migration to from rural areas to the towns. The only answer to the

Barakal, one of the protesters, said Jackie Barakal, one of the protesters, said

smouldering fire amongst the sixty people circling the sand sculpture. In groups the Aborigines and their friends moved to the centre circle of the design, representing a sacred water hole, to be washed from water carted in for the occasion. The spirit group of the dead man being commemorated was now at rest and an afternoon of feasting could begin.

The ceremony at Fish Camp concluded months of rituals for a respected elder who had dedicated the last months of his life fighting for a living place for his people. Like most of those paying homage in the clearing, the old man was originally from the remote Arnhem Land Reserve, near the settlement of Maningrida, where customs are still strong. He had lost his feet and fingers while a patient in the notorious Darwin leprosarium.

When this institution was closed in 1982, the old man had been

Lee Point, a popular picnic area on the northern edge of the city. The spirit group had lived there for over four years, using the public amenities. They were now dumped at Fish Camp which is a dust bowl in the dry season and flooded during the monsoon. Drinking water is carried in containers with nothing spare for washing.

Last November Bob and a few of his followers returned to Lee Point, set up camp on vacant Crown Land and vowed never to leave again. Their protest signs stated simply 'Shelter is every person's right' and 'We are citizens too'.

On the eve of Christmas the NT Minister for Lands, Environment and Planning, Mike Reed, issued an

of the homeless in Darwin by the Northern Territory government, in power since self-government in 1978, is harassment.

"I am an indigenous person, not a trespasser". For three weeks the camp remained in defiance of the government order.

After a dawn raid The Minister for Lands Planning and Environment says because the Aborigines will be incompatible with the development they will be 'relocated', their houses flattened and the area converted to a public park.

The worst dictatorships have hesitated to forcibly prevent migration to from rural areas to the towns. The only answer to the plight of the homeless in Darwin by the Northern Territory government, in power since self-government in 1978, is harassment. While this attitude continues, the mourning ceremony for Bob Bunduwabi held at Fish Camp last week will not be the last.

Jackie Barakal who led the smoking ceremony at Fish Camp for

"If these people want to leave their

premature death, attributed to his living conditions by health workers, Aborigines from most of the town camps danced painted in white ochre as Bob's mattress and his humble belongings were burnt where he had lived.

A nephew, Andrew Duwabi, told the media, "My uncle died for us, so that we could have a place to live here at Lee Point". The ritual for the dead man is now completed but Bob's spirit lives on, giving inspiration to others appealing for the most basic of human needs.



To send a clear message that indigenous peoples are valued, respected and an integral part of the community.

ENDORSED BY Australians for Reconciliation, in conjunction with the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, Kulumbirgin Aboriginal Corporation, Larrakia Nations, Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, The AustralAsian, as well as community groups, schools and churches.

A 1997 Fringe Festival Event

Reconciliation March

Saturday 2nd August, Darwin
Meet at Myilly Point at 4pm and march together to Mindil Beach.

Stay for the free concert featuring: Wild Water, Crimplene, Sebastian Jorgensen, Trebles Without Accord and many other great performers, plus food and information stalls.