

Recommendations for a Kulaluk Wilderness, Heritage and Education Park

A last opportunity to be true to the vision of its founders

- Map of Kulaluk lease showing areas for reafforestation, fire control and restoration projects
- ‘Is it a wasted land – NO!’ Hilary Thompson’s Tracks, *The Advertiser*, Darwin, February 24th 1983
- ‘Kulaluk Controversy Continues,’ *The Advertiser*, Darwin, March 30th, 1982. Plans for Minmarama Village ‘transient camp’ were opposed.
- A walk through Kulaluk, by B Day. From *Bunji* March 1978.
- Bill Day’s Camp on Kulaluk Beach, 1979 – 1985
- ‘Kids,’ Out and About, by Diana Plater, *Darwin Star*, May 22nd 1980, p.3.
- Gwalwa Daraniki Association Inc 1995 *Our future at Kulaluk and Minmarama Park: Facts about the threats to our social and economic development.*
- Map attached to Gwalwa Daraniki Association Inc and Vysrose Pty Ltd (1997), *Kulaluk Development Proposal: development brief for the development Part Lot 5182, Bagot Road Town of Darwin* showing golf course, motels and hotel.

Appendices to a Report by

Bill Day PhD (UWA)

Consulting Anthropologist

Darwin

April 2008

Hand-drawn map of the Beagle Gulf area, showing reforestation and restoration priorities. The map includes a north arrow, a scale bar (1:2000), and various labeled areas:

- Right of Way (insert)**: A yellow-shaded area along the top left boundary.
- Boundary**: A line running diagonally across the map.
- BEAGLE GULF**: The body of water to the left of the boundary.
- Mangroves**: A green-shaded area along the boundary.
- Monsoon forest**: A green-shaded area to the right of the mangroves.
- Plant Trees (grass control)**: A green-shaded area to the right of the monsoon forest.
- Reeds**: A green-shaded area to the right of the plant trees.
- Restore Wetlands Stop Salt**: A green-shaded area to the right of the reeds.
- Sports fields**: A green-shaded area to the right of the wetlands.
- Minmar area**: A green-shaded area to the right of the sports fields.
- landscape**: A green-shaded area to the right of the minmar area.
- plant eucalypt**: A green-shaded area to the right of the landscape.
- Intepretative Centre / car park**: A green-shaded area to the right of the eucalypt.
- 8631 1110 m2**: A green-shaded area to the right of the interpretative centre.
- 8630**: A green-shaded area to the right of the 8631 area.
- 8182**: A green-shaded area to the right of the 8630 area.
- R1135**: A road running horizontally across the map.
- SEE ENLARGEMENT**: A label pointing to a specific area.
- FOR ENLARGEMENT SEE 477/93A**: A label pointing to a specific area.
- FOR ENLARGEMENT SEE 477/918**: A label pointing to a specific area.
- Grass Control**: A green-shaded area to the right of the 8631 area.
- Mangrove forest**: A green-shaded area to the right of the mangroves.
- Restore flats**: A green-shaded area to the right of the mangrove forest.
- plant trees**: A green-shaded area to the right of the restore flats.

Legend:

- Reafforestation - restoration - fire control priority areas**: Represented by green shading.
- Monsoon forest (healthy)**: Represented by diagonal hatching.

25

Is it wasted land — No!

These are the waking hours and the trees bustle with life.

The sun has cleared the horizon and another day has started. Activity before the mid-day torpor.

Spoor in the soft sand shows where an agile wallaby has crossed. Other tracks, smaller these ones, trace the course of a hermit-crab, dragging its shell.

Overhead, spangled drongoes chatter and chase one another through the trees, glossy black birds with forked tails.

A single whistling kite flaps up out of cover and rides into the thin, pale sky.

Noisy helmeted friarbirds call raucously from the treetops.

These are not the only sounds; there's a whole orchestra of them: the insect-like buzzing of the golden-headed cisticola, a pocket-sized warbler of the undergrowth; the harsh rattle of the varied triller; the high-pitched screeching of the red-collared lorikeets.

The sandy track leads through a small creek, edged with mangroves. This little channel is periodically swamped with water from the sea and the salt keeps the mangroves going where other plants can't tolerate the conditions.

It is soft underfoot, the mud yielding to a footfall and closing up again with a dusky swirl in the tepid water.

As the track leaves the creek it enters a more open area, densely grown with spear-grass, and leads up to a small rise.

This is a low dune, strewn with the creeping stems of Ipomoea, its lilac trumpet-shaped flowers twitching in the breeze of a warming earth. Here land meets sea and the mangroves rule, not just hanging on in saline corners but dominating the scene.

Already the tide is swirling in across the glutinous mud, giving the outlying trees the first of their twice-daily inundations.

Wading birds are busily working its fringe for the food that is being delivered, literally, at their feet.

There is a different orchestra - different instruments and a different tune.

The wild piping of grey plovers as they paddle out to touch the hem of the tide; the fluting of greenshank driven off their mud-bank by the rising ripples; the laryngeal screech of a whimbrel, surprised from the mangroves.

A jabiru circles and lands, a giant among the scurrying waders. A small group of pelicans breast the rising waters, a flotilla for food.

Silver gulls squabble on the tide-line and with them a single, larger gull. This is a Japanese gull, an individual that has been in the area for several months. It has a certain exclusive quality; this is only the second time this species which breeds on the coasts of China and Japan, has been seen in Australia.

It may be a long way from home but it seems to be thriving, gaining the colours of adulthood in its plumage and its beak.

It's not a long-distance traveller, compared with some of the other birds that are stoking up in the rich mud. The grey flit amongst the flowers of the mangroves, the males with bright vermilion hoods.

The little terek sandpiper that runs like a mouse along the shore is another long-distance traveller, actually named after a river in Siberia.



With Hilary Thompson

Bar-tailed godwits, long-legged and long-billed, are taking on the rusty hue of their breeding plumage. This presages their long haul back to their Siberian nesting grounds and a short season on the tundra. There they will take up territories, find mates and lay their eggs.

The eggs will hatch and the young, which are independent almost at once, will grow rapidly.

When they are mature and fully feathered, they will migrate south, perhaps to feed on the same muddy tropical shores.

The mangroves form their own world, or, if you prefer it, a half-world, between the sea and the land.

Several birds prefer the mangrove habitat, representatives of woodland families that have adapted to this special kind of forest.

Tiny red-headed honeyeaters flit the flowers of the mangroves, the males with bright vermilion hoods.

Mangroves warblers give their plaintive rambling songs from the cover of the glossy green leaves.

Not far away is the soulful whistle of the little bronze-cuckoo. This small-scale cuckoo will often lay its eggs in the nests of mangrove warblers.

Yellow white-eyes tinkle through the mangroves in active parties, feeding on minute insects amongst the foliage.

A walk along the sand, strewn with the bleached driftwood of a hundred storms brings a movement in the trees on the landward side.

These are three red-crowned pigeons, bright green above, with a red patch on the forehead and an extravagant merging of orange and yellow on the belly.

This sounds gaudy - and looks it on the flat pages of a book - but in the wild, with the tricks of lights and shadow, it is a fine camouflage.

Further on there is a gap in the mangroves which affords a view across the mouth of the creek where its waters meet the competing flow with the swirl of the incoming tide.

Dead mangroves, fading skeletons in the muddy water, provide a resting place for other birds, pied cormorants and burdekin ducks, ornaments of black and white.

In the short time it has taken the tide to run into the mangroves and ripple over the sucking mud, the sun has risen above the trees.

Already, it has a painful glare through the humid air and there is shimmer of moisture above the tree-tops.

Back at the creek, a little egret is fishing in the shallows, shaded by the branches of the overhanging trees.

Even the friarbirds are starting to grow quiet and the drongoes

have abandoned their aerial chases.

So, where are we?

Some remote estuary on the coast of Arnhemland?

An island with scarcely a human footprint in its soil?

No. There is a distant hum of traffic on Dick Ward Drive and your ears are soon to be shattered by a B-52 taking off right over your head.

You're only ten minutes from Nightcliff shops.

This is Kulaluk, the portion of

Aboriginal land lying west of the connector road, a sanctuary in the city.

I've heard people complain that land is wasted on Aborigines.

"They don't do anything with it!"

They don't put up office blocks or multi-storey car-parks, is what they mean.

They don't develop things.

Good.

I think what the Kulaluk people have done is just fine.

HILARY THOMPSON'S

LIMOSA

WILDLIFE AGENCY

SPECIAL INTEREST
WILDLIFE TOURS

PHONE: 81 8926

TELEX: AA85162

P.O. BOX 39373,

WINNELLIE, N.T. 5789

Kulaluk controversy continues

Interested parties are still haggling over plans to set up transient facilities for Aborigines within the Kulaluk lease off Dick Ward Drive.

The former long-time secretary of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association at Kulaluk Mr Bill Day has written to Minister for Community Development Ian Tuxworth setting out 12 reasons why the proposed transient area should be dropped.

But Kulaluk manager Mr Richard Baugh and officers within the department say the association has now approved plans for full-scale development of a transient area within the lease.

And Lord Mayor Cec Black who wants to see the transient and "town camp" situation centralised, also wants to see liaison between Aboriginal Affairs and the Town Council on the issue.

Mayor Black says it's essential to ascertain the wishes of the Kulaluk people and a wider community.

"It may be that the Council will have to re-think its plan" said Mr Black "it may take years to find the best solution but if no start is made now it could drag on for 50 years."

Mr Tuxworth said yesterday that the Department of Community Development had held protracted negotiations with the Gwalwa Daraniki Association over a suitable site for transients.

He said that in anticipation of agreement the Government had set aside considerable funds to provide the infrastructure for the development: water, power, sewerage and good roads into the selected site or sites.

It is understood that the development will cost an estimated \$200,000 and perhaps considerably more.

Although he has just resigned his position as secretary to the GDA, Mr Bill Day still has considerable influence on Kulaluk affairs and because of his years of experience among the people may influence the Government.

Among the 12 objections listed by Mr Day in his letter to Mr Tuxworth are claims that:



Bobby Secretary, the ageing but still lively traditional owner of most of Kulaluk. The area involves 3000 hectares but much of it is tidal swampland and a great deal more very low ground. Mr Secretary is not disturbed about the likely setting up of established camps for transients on part of Kulaluk.

- Transients would seriously hinder the traditional family/community oriented use of Kulaluk lease by urban people. Mr Day told Mr Tuxworth that most transients were single drinking men.

- The plan for transients could be compared with South Africa's Bantustans and black townships. The camps could become odious, implanted institutions more reminiscent of the old compound.

- Transients behave much like anyone away from restraining influences —e.g. Australians in Bali or Munich). They behave badly and offend the locals.

Control of the camps would be beyond the resources of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association and was not practicable for cultural reasons.

- "Illegal camps" around town average about 10 members and these are made up of compatible people. Planned camps for Kulaluk envisage 30 to 40 in each. They would not hold together for a week. Campers would

then establish dozens of small unserved groups throughout the bush, particularly for drinking sessions. Lack of access means litter problems.

- Centralised camps, no matter what facilities are provided, will be a health risk.

- Darwin is growing into a sophisticated city in which transient camps will be increasingly unacceptable to black and white residents.

- Kulaluk is an area of great value and potential to Darwin as a whole but generally not suited to residential use. Considerations are: low lying swampy ground; flightpaths of an increasingly busy airport; unique untouched monsoon rain forest and traffic engineering re-entry to Dick Ward drive.

- The camps could be seen to encourage drunkenness or evolve into a home base for the hard-core of Aboriginal drunks who are not true transients and whose needs can better be served elsewhere.

9.4 'Shared Responsibility Agreement to Alienate Land Won in Land Rights Struggle.'

By Dr William B Day

As commuters drive from Darwin's northern suburbs to their city offices along Dick Ward Drive, the monotony of apartments and light industry lining the busy arterial road is broken by a kilometre of bushland and mangroves as the route bisects the 301 hectare Kulaluk lease, held by the Aboriginal Gwalwa Daraniki Association (GDA) since 1979. The struggle for the return of this unique area of urban bushland, tidal flats and mangrove forest began in 1971, when the Larrakia people and their supporters raised their flag outside the Darwin Supreme Court to claim back their ancestral land on which the City of Darwin had been built. For the next two years, the group directed a campaign that culminated in the firebombing of a surveyor's truck as extensions to a housing subdivision threatened their beachside camp. The story is told in the book, *Bunji: a story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement*.

The land that was eventually granted in 1979 'for Aboriginal Community use' incorporates the revoked areas of the old Bagot Aboriginal Reserve after the reserve had been diminished to a fraction of its original size and hemmed in on three sides by the suburb of Ludmilla. Aboriginal people have traditionally camped and hunted throughout the Kulaluk area and many are buried in the old cemetery now reclaimed by the monsoon forest. However few other Darwin residents are aware of the urban ecosystem beyond what is seen from the road as they drive by.

Despite the significance of the area to Aboriginal people, according to the Minister for Planning and Lands, the Kulaluk land was excluded from the Larrakia native title claim over the City of Darwin because 'the issue of Crown Lease Perpetual No.671 predates the application for a determination of native title.' Ironically then, land that was granted to the Larrakia and others after their long struggle is alienated from the increasingly influential Larrakia Nation whose headquarters now adjoin the lease. Instead, the Kulaluk controlling body, the Gwalwa Daraniki Association, is an incorporated group that has no affiliation with the Larrakia representative organisation.

Since the granting of the Kulaluk lease the Gwalwa Daraniki Association has proposed schemes from quarries to canal housing estates, motels and golf courses, all of which have been thwarted by objections from those who fought for the land to be set aside. In one corner a McDonald's restaurant stands as 'an anchor lease' on the theory that a high profile business will attract others. No similar proposals have eventuated, as the flight path of the Darwin International Airport prohibits zoning approval.

In 1997, excavation machinery began working deep inside the lease, in a tidal area draining into Ludmilla Creek, used by Darwin Aboriginal people for crabbing, fishing, shellfish gathering and general picnicking. Five ponds varying from 9000 square metres to 1300 square metres, bordered by levee banks, were being gouged from the salt flats to create a three-hectare 'prawn farm' with approximately 2000 to 4000 cubic metres of seawater flowing through the system daily. The three hectare area being excavated was also a roosting site for migratory wading birds at high tides. At low tide, the mud flats came alive with flashes of colour as red-clawed crabs darted from their burrows to feed.

The aquaculture project aimed to produce two crops per year of tiger prawns to be sold through SAFCOL. As the work preceded, 'keep out' signs, fences and gates appeared. Obviously, recreational crabbers and fishers would no longer be welcome in this part of the lease. At the same time, new access roads were bulldozed and mangroves cleared for powerlines. A project spokesperson stated that objectors to the prawn farm were 'condemning Aboriginal and Islander people trying to pursue sustainable economic and social progress.'

Within four years the \$150,000 ponds lay as an abandoned mosquito-breeding haven. Beside the cleared but unused power line easement, dumped steel poles lay rusting in the mud, while a Darwin headstone was to be tragically inscribed, 'Aquaculture was his dream. He died doing what he loved.' There was no evidence of restoration as stated under Schedule 10 of the Development Permit DP97/0077, 'upon cessation of the use, the area used for ponds shall be rehabilitated to the

requirements and satisfaction of the Secretary, Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.' Despite one defence of the project that its construction had 'cleared a lot of coffee bush,' in fact the earth works and previous mosquito breeding drainage works had actually spread the seeds of this weed.

In 2005 came the announcement that the Commonwealth Government had signed a Shared Responsibility Agreement (SRA) with the Gwalwa Daraniki Association to provide 'the foundations for a mud crab business that can employ young people and develop business skills amongst indigenous communities in Darwin harbour' (www.indigenous.gov.au/sra/nt/fact_sheets/nt06.pdf). The SRA provides \$450,000 for the conversion of the failed prawn farm to a crab farm by providing 'specialist aquaculture support as well as a project officer to coordinate business development.' The SRA funding will be coordinated through Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) and Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEP), for six aquaculture trainees and two administration trainees. Meanwhile, a steering committee made up of representatives from the Gwalwa Daraniki Association, Northern Territory and Federal Government agencies and the Charles Darwin University will oversee operation of the new development.

Earlier statements claimed that the crab farm would be restricted to the original 'footprint' of the prawn ponds; however, media reports claim that the application has been held up by the NT Environment Protection Authority (EPA) because of plans to double the farm's size to 5.25 hectares by clearing mangroves at Kulaluk. Meanwhile, the application was being considered by the NT Government Planning Minister, Dr Chris Burns. The *NT News* reported (March 20, 2006): 'Although [the crab farm] is yet to be approved, the Territory Planning Department said small-scale operations have already started.'¹ Earlier, a NT Government media release stated that the new venture was proceeding 'following years of negotiations with the NT Government's Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development (DBIRD). According to the media release, fifteen tons of mud crabs a year will generate around \$235,000 in the first three years before expanding in future years.

In response to criticism, Dr Chris Burns echoed statements used to defend the since failed prawn ponds - 'The business venture for the mud crab farm is an initiative of the Kulaluk community and a progressive step towards establishing a potentially long term sustainable enterprise that could bring real opportunities for cross-cultural education, training and employment to the Kulaluk community.'

At the same time as plans were being made for the crab farm, The NT Government announced that 26,000 hectares of mangroves in the Darwin harbour were to be protected. The Minister announced: 'Any future clearing within the Conservation Zone will now require planning consent, with any proposals to go through a strict public process.' Despite this assurance, Adele Pedder of the Australian Marine Conservation Society in Darwin believes that there is a lack of any overall policy and strategic planning in relation to aquaculture in the NT. She is concerned that 'the industry will continue to grow in a piecemeal, poorly regulated, profit driven manner with serious implications for the environment, the community, and ultimately for the industry itself.' These comments parallel the accusations being made about a Commonwealth Government SRA being used for an unapproved, unviable and destructive project that could be environmentally and socially damaging.

Even more seriously, according to the few survivors of the fight to preserve the Kulaluk open space for Aboriginal community use, the joint venture further distances the Kulaluk land from community control. Certainly, weekend crab hunters and yam gatherers will not be welcome near the unfenced ponds, as the signage already indicates. Although the Kulaluk venture is said to serve as a demonstration site for other interested communities, at Maningrida in Central Arnhem Land a crab farm effectively uses only above-ground pools set amongst the mangroves. On Aboriginal land it is unlikely any community would agree to such massive excavation works as occurred at Kulaluk in 1997 and that are being sustained in 2006.

¹ No one has yet explained how ponds designed for prawn breeding, in an experiment that failed, can then be suitable for crab farming.

Despite the Conservation Zone protecting the Kulaluk mangroves that provide an abundance of bush foods for town dwellers in times of shortage, the disturbance that has already occurred for aquaculture ponds leaves open the dreams of real estate developers who have shown an interest in the Ludmilla Creek system. Standing beside the hectares of drains and ponds now existent at Kulaluk, it does not take much imagination to picture the still, deep waters as anchorages for millionaires' boats.



Above: An aerial view of the abandoned prawn ponds on the Kulaluk lease, looking towards Ludmilla Creek and Fannie Bay before the ponds were converted to a 'crab farm.' Note mangrove regrowth. Photo by M Wakeham, *EnvironmeNT*, May/June 2005, p.5.

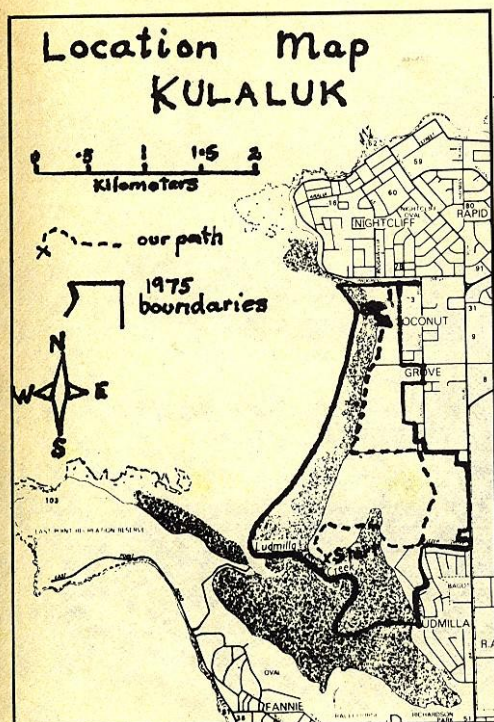
A WALK THROUGH KULALUK

IN WORDS AND PICTURES

A Special Edition of *BUNJI* – March 1978



The Fitzer Drive gate.



Come with us on a walk through Kulaluk, as a guest of the Larrakia tribe. Discover the secrets of this bushland refuge of eight hundred and fifty acres in the heart of sprawling Darwin.

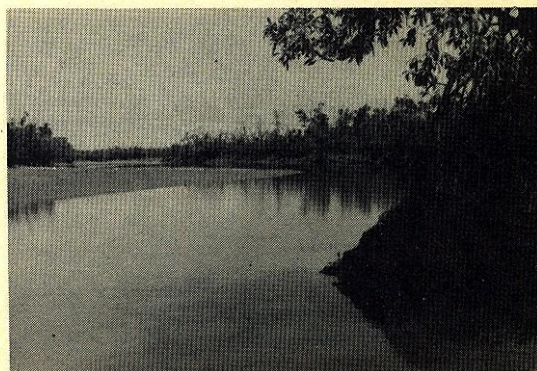
Let us start our walk at the southern boundary of the land claim, the steep muddy banks of a tidal creek. Twice each day the tide floods in with a rise of up to eight metres, but even on the lowest tides, as we find it today, there are plenty of fish in the salt water pools. Being a weekday, and very hot there are not the usual children from Bagot Reserve splashing and playing in the shallows while their mothers patiently cast a line from the sandbanks. No fear of the two resident crocodiles which are too small yet to be a danger.

There are huge mud crabs too, a tasty meal, if a long hooked wire can force them from their holes amongst the mangrove roots.

Everywhere is mangroves, hundreds of metres on both sides of the creek, across the mudflats of the bay and anywhere the creeping hightides filter. Not a wasteland, but teeming with life and 'bush tucker'. Along with a hooked wire, a fishing line and a multi-barbed fish spear, the Bagot people often carry a tomahawk to split open the rotting dead wood and gather mangrove worms as an extra delicacy.

'Bagot beach', between the mudflats and the jungle, is dotted with the ashes of cooking fires heaped around with roasted shells that are gathered freely while the men are wading the shallows hoping to spear a stingray or mullet. The flagon bottles are a more convenient carrier than the giant shells of older times. These shell water-carriers can still be found, probably brought across the islands in visiting canoes.

Behind the beach, the jungle is thick and tangled, continually enriching the sandy soil with falling leaves and forest litter. In this forbidding environment, the jungle fowl are left in peace to hatch their eggs in nests of hot sand.



The banks of Ludmilla Creek at low tide.

A WALK THROUGH KULALUK CONT.



Mangroves in an arm of Ludmilla Creek.



The remains of a picnic on Bagot beach.



The floor of the rainforest.



A jungle fowls nest close to the beach.

Push through the jungle, only about thirty metres wide along this stretch, and we are out onto the saltpan, the size of three football fields. It was in fact once used for football by Bagot teams and more recently as an unofficial speedway. The Gwalaw Daraniki has fenced off the saltpan which once again is loud with the cries of flocks of birds, startled by our intrusion. It hasn't taken long for the abandoned stock cars to rust away but the salt marsh plants will take much longer to recarpet this delicate environment.

'Fish Camp' is ahead of us, atop an ancient sand dune where the forest survives only in patches. Clearing and activity by the army during the war, thirty five years ago, introduced the grasses and lantana that in turn fed destructive bushfires. The small group of residents here are hard at work clearing the grass and lantana to use the shallow top soil the old forest bed, to grow fine vegetables including sweet potato, mellons, peanuts and paw-paw. While the vegetables are growing, a tree planting project is in progress.

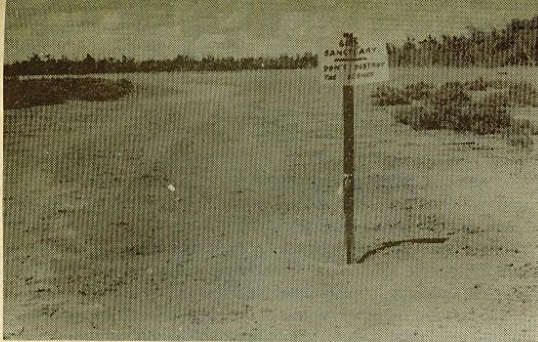
The results of two years work is already a land-mark.

The fruits, flowers and shelter from this work are already attracting back the birds and wildlife, and if the occasional snake, goanna or possum goes into the cooking coals it is a minor loss compared to the destruction of the environment that has gone on for years in the developing city and in Kulaluk itself.



An old car rusts away on the salt pan.

A WALK THROUGH KULALUK CONT.



Protecting the Salt Marsh.



Fred Fogarty in the garden.



The tree planting project.



A campsite.

This camp looks across the ⁺expensive flat that buffers 'Kulaluk South' from the suburb of Ludmilla. It is the old dump where most of cyclone wasted Darwin lies buried.

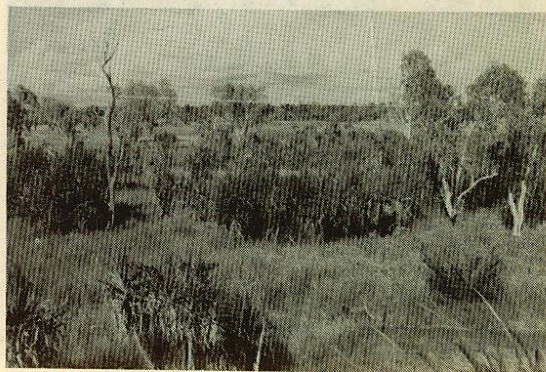
After a refreshing cup of tea and the latest news from the 'Kulaluk wireless' we head east over the area bulldozed by the City Council three years ago for extensions to the dump. Protests stopped the dump, without saving the gum trees. Fortunately the hardy suckers look like undoing the damage in time. They offer some privacy for someone's bush shelter.

Where the track follows the powerlines northward to Totem Road, the land dips down into a freshwater swamp which can be viewed from the heights of the Works Department earth dump, another intrusion that has devastated about ten acres.

A few jabiru are out in the middle, making an amazing contrast to busy Bagot Highway immediately behind us.

Clambering down from the hill and wading knee deep, we follow the track sturdy milkwoods to Totem Road where one of the survey pegs clearly marks that corner boundary of the land claim, pegged by the Lands Department surveyors in 1975. From this marker the boundary runs along Coconut Grove to the fenceline of Tropicus Nursery. The only all weather service track leads from this corner.

Skirting the wetlands, we follow this path eastward to reach the old Aboriginal cemetery. It is overgrown with a lonely single marked grave.



A view across the wetland between Totem Rd and Fitzer Dr.



The town plan has rezoned this corner of Kulaluk too.



A sign beside Totam Road.



The only marked grave in the old burial ground.

A WALK THROUGH KULALUK CONT.

A search reveals less obvious signs — a couple of decaying pukamini, or 'totem' poles hidden in the bush.

Two other points of interest in this area are a very old jungle fowl nesting mound over twelve feet high and a concrete lined well, which is brim full of fresh water in the driest months. The Larrakia themselves traditionally dug their wells in these parts.

There are only two banyan trees in the whole 850 acres of Kulaluk beside the creek. This creek runs the full length of Kulaluk and is practically inaccessible with shade *mangroves*.

The last few hundred metres of the track crosses a break in the coastal rainforest belt, into high grass. Probably another area of wartime activity, because, the track ends at an old fort on the beach.

The deserted frames of Aboriginal shelters along this part of the beach prove this is a favoured picnic spot for Bagot visitors. This beach forms a natural pathway to the camp at the far northern end of Kulaluk. The mangroves on the left and the forest on the right make the beach suffocatingly hot in the middle of the day. The mangrove belt effectively breaks the monsoonal waves, stabilizing, even reclaiming the shoreline.

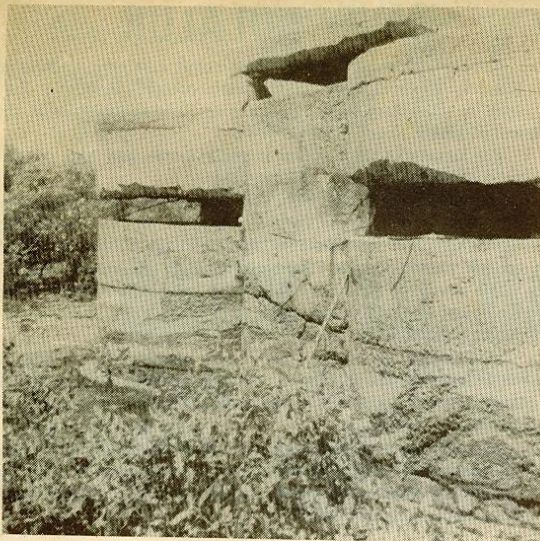
As the rooftops of the camp come in sight we see the very worst effects of departmental vandalism. The laying of a sewerage main was used as an opportunity to cart away hundreds



The Banyan tree by the creek.



A shadey part of the creek.



war time fort on the beach.



The mudflats of the Bay — seaward side of the mangroves.



Errision cased by pipelaying and sand mining Coconut Grove.

A WALK THROUGH KULALUK

CONT.

of tons of the white sand. Promises have been made to restore the area but in parts this is impossible. Where restoration is feasible, a few trees have been planted, only distinguished by the stakes showing above the tall grass.

A placid lily pond, narrowly missed by the bulldozers, illustrates the type of country traversed by the pipeline.

We must now cross the two leases and see the effect of unplanned speculation. The contrast shows up on the aerial photograph. Despite the efforts of the Aborinines to halt the subdivision of this part, culminating in violent clashes some years ago, the two leases are shown as FU, future urban, on the Town Plan. This is a proposal that must be opposed by every means.

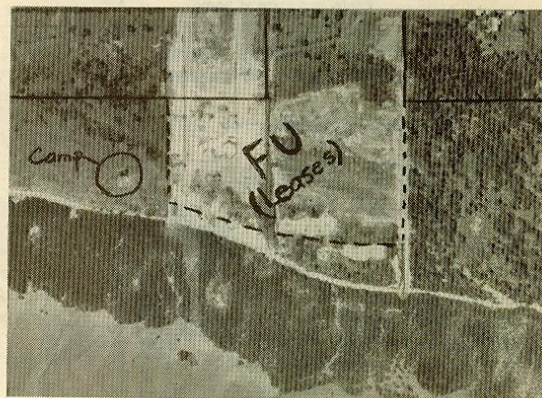
As an incentive to the sale of their sea-level subdivision, the developers actually began to cut down the mangroves to give an ocean view.

This swarth can be seen on the aerial photograph, near the camp clustered around the tree on the old jungle fowl mound. This simple camp of iron huts is the symbol of defiance by the Larrakia people. It receives many visitors, particularly for social gatherings away from the restrictive institutionalised Bagot Reserve of the self-consciousness of suburbia. The campsite is also ideal for dancing and ceremonies of mourning or celebration and in this function is no less important than a church.

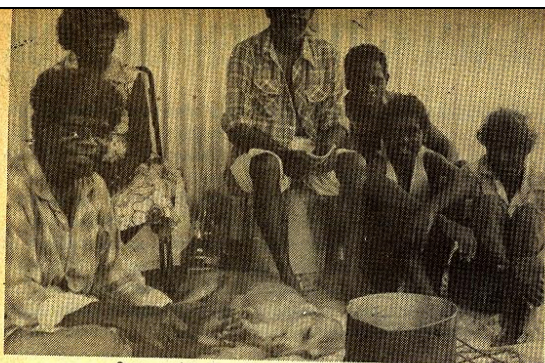
He hopes that our tour of Kulaluk has convinced you of the significance of this battle and that he can look forward to your support.



A lily pond behind Bakhita village.



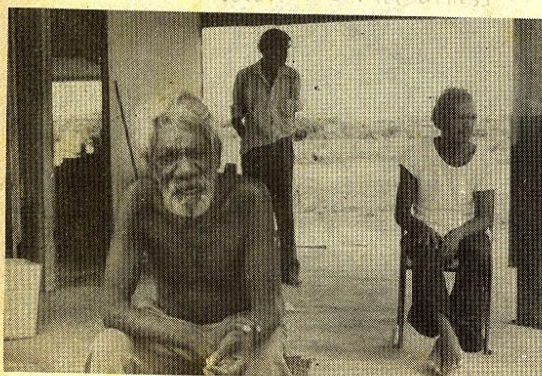
Aerial photo of the two leases. Zoned FU — Future Urban.



Some residents and visitors at Bobby's camp.

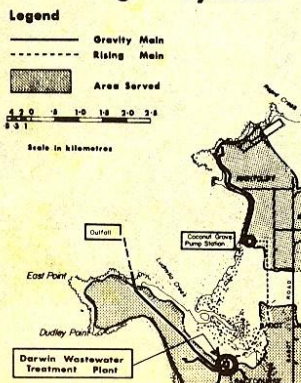


Replanting the original Coconut Grove.



Bobby secretary at home.

Darwin Central Zone Sewerage System



SAVE KULALUK

The Town Planners have already begun cutting out pieces of Kulaluk. "We will just take this little corner," they say. They want to sell a very important piece of Kulaluk bushland at the end of Totem Road.

The answer to the Gwalaw Daraniki letter was "this is not a valid objection".

Last month the people from Fish camp wrote their own letter. This is their letter to the Town Planners — "In 1975 the Interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner, the late Judge Ward recommended that vacant land, lot 7649 be included in the Kulaluk claim.

The new town plan has left lot 7649 out of the Kulaluk claim. We object strongly to this as lot 7649 has the only wet weather access track to Fish Camp.

This track is in constant use in dry weather for carriage of water for camp use and the survival garden. The blockage of the track through lot 7649 in this case would kill off Aboriginal initiative.

Also as important, this track is in use for transportation of old age pensioners to hospital when there is no alternative track of a wet. The blockage of the track through lot 7649 could well mean the matter of life or death."

signed Fred Fogerty.

STOP THE BUREAUCRATS

There are four major threats to the preservation of the Kulaluk bushland. They all come from the bureaucrats with a long history of insensitivity to environment and a total disregard of Aborigines.

The most urgent is the revised town plan. It has ignored the Kulaluk boundaries in two important areas.

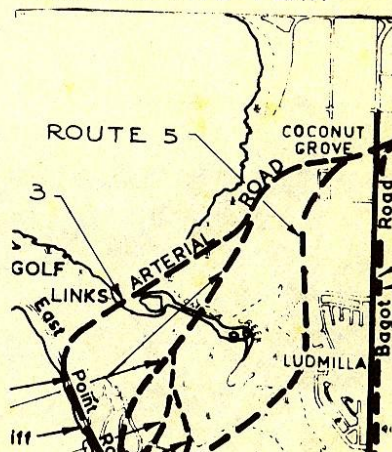
The second is the constant threat of the 'Palmerston Freeway! As the map shows, this would mean total devastation of the whole area.

The third is the path of the sewerage easement, where the damage has been done but not restored as was promised. The map shows where the 'easement' carved through Kulaluk.

The fourth threat is the road planned to follow the dotted line of the sewerage easement. They must all be opposed, by any methods.

DARWIN

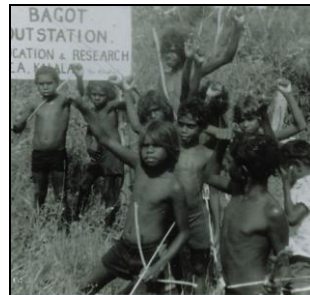
PALMERSTON ARTERIAL ROAD GENERAL SITE PLAN



9.6 Bill Day's Camp on Kulaluk Beach, 1979 – 1985



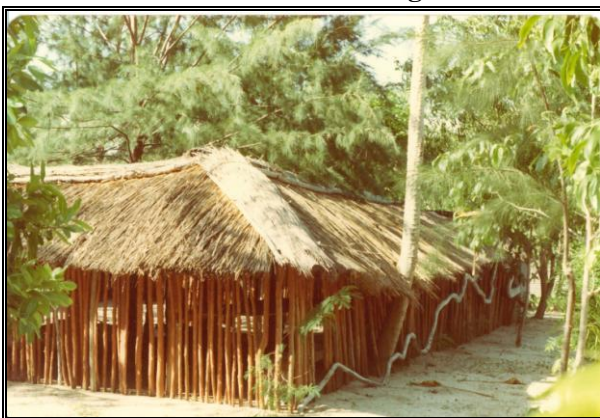
In 1970 Bobby Secretary was the first to build a camp at Kulaluk in Coconut Grove. Later Fred Fogarty built a house down from Fitzer Drive (above).



Bill Day's camp began beside the Kulaluk Beach, down from Totem Road, in mid 1979



There was a bridge where the track crossed a tidal creek. Every year there were more buildings made of bush materials and things from the dump, painted with clays.



Tamarind trees, casuarinas and paw paws grew well in the sandy soil.



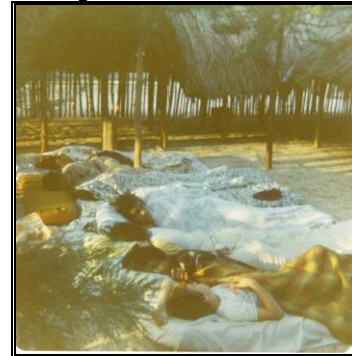
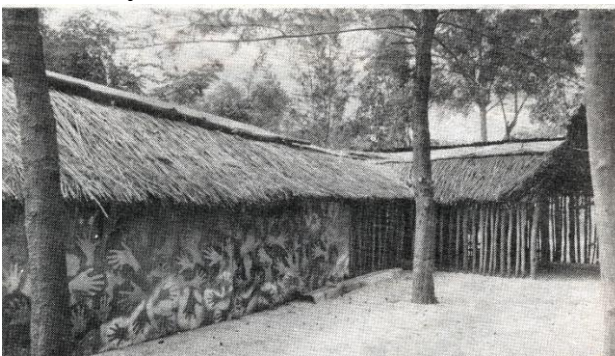
Driftwood from the beach, coffee bush and mangrove was used, with a floor of shells.



Fish, stingrays and crabs were caught twice a day in the trap on the tidal flats nearby.



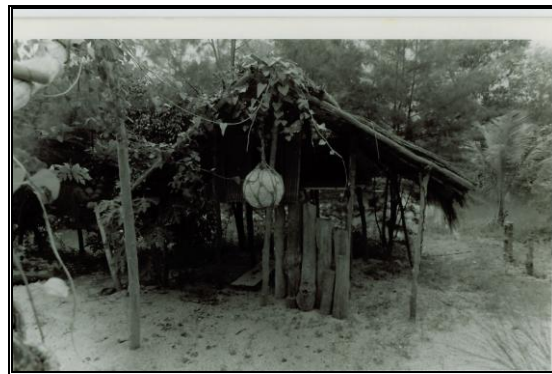
The trap could be seen from the lookout. There was a flying fox over the fresh water pool that filled every wet season. Baramundi were sometimes put into the pool.



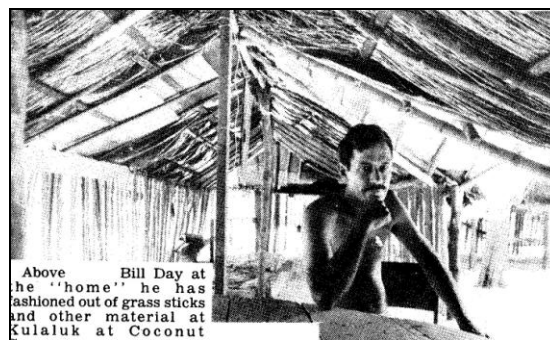
In the middle of the buildings there was a courtyard, with the outline of visitor's hands sprayed on the wall.



Bagot kids used a sand hill for a waterslide and for their 'go cart' hill trolley.



The pool filled with freshwater in the wet season and there was a hut like an Aboriginal sleeping platform (Photos *NT News*).

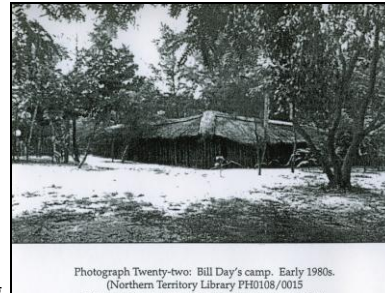


Above Bill Day at the 'home' he has fashioned out of grass sticks and other material at Kulaluk at Coconut

In 1985 when the dream was ended, Bill demolished the buildings on Kulaluk Beach. By 2008 only a grove of shady tamarind trees and some ruins remain at the camp.



Left: A creek crossing



Photograph Twenty-two: Bill Day's camp. Early 1980s. (Northern Territory Library PH0108/0015)

Photos, B Day, *NT News*, *Darwin Star*, ABC, NT Library.

Out and about: A guide

KIDS

A visitor's first impression of Kulaluk "outstation" might be well be of an african village of thatched huts or of a Wild West fort protected by armed soldiers.

But the red, yellow and black Aboriginal flag flying high over the roof gives the game away.

Earlier a sign warned that this was not just an unusual piece of bush between the Darwin and the sea but an important recreation area to the people of Bagot Aboriginal Reserve.

Childrens' laughter floats across as you discover you either have to cross a rickety miniature version of the Bridge on the River Kwai or wade through some muddy water to get to the camp.

But it's worth it.

The camp looks over the hollow of a former quarry.

The camp looks over a hollow of a former quarry. A caravan and a circular shelter with a thatched roof is surrounded on one side by bush and the other by a sandhill. A scramble to the top gives one of Darwin's best views - blue water, white sands and miles of mangroves.

Some boys have been out fishing in a boat. They drag it onto the sand - no fish today but they did catch a crab which they take up to the camp to cook.

Cubby houses the children built are visited by a group of chooks - the remainder of the \$2 specials that have not been eaten will be kept as layers.

Like Aboriginal outstations everywhere, Bagot outstation has its distinctive aims. Firstly it was started to look after the land on a part of the Kulaluk lease which was being ravaged by trail bikes, dumpers and people helping themselves to the sand.

People could go there to get away from problem drinkers and it gave them a chance to "find themselves" without being overmanaged by one policy or the other.

But this month, like most weekends, the camp has been filled with Bagot's school children. The third program of vacation activities there since the first rustic shelters went up last July has proved an overwhelming success.

And why not? The beach setting at Kulaluk is a kid's dream. Maybe that's why they nicknamed it "Paradise Island".

When one group goes home to Bagot in the afternoon for a rest another lot quickly

rest another lot quickly takes their place.

In the shallow bay the swimming is great, helped by two old dinghys and a few inner tubes donated to the camp.

Billy Day runs the holiday program - which he says is pretty loose as the children prefer to make their

Edited By

own fun.

The Department of Community Development has assisted with a grant of \$800, which has mainly gone to food and utensils as the children have more fun cooking and eating than painting and other more traditional holiday ideas.

One problem in the coming Dry Season is the lack of fresh water, with the nearest tap 600 metres away.

The camp can also use more cooking and eating gear, especially big pots and some extra bedding.

A few hours' work with a front end loader or grader could be helpful too.

If you've got something you think children could play on or with don't throw it out, leave a message on 81 6222.

When they're not at the camp a large group of Bagot boys and girls have been seen dominating the roller skating rinks and the Twixteen discos.

At night the boys stay down at the camp and keep themselves amused telling stories about Dracula and other monsters that lurk in the bush around them.

School might start next week but the kids from Bagot will be down at their Kulaluk camp until the bell rings.

REGGAE

Reggae music - the rhythmic beat of the West Indies - is gaining

9.8 Gwalwa Daraniki Association Inc 1995 *Our future at Kulaluk and Minmarama Park: Facts about the threats to our social and economic development.*

**1. The Gwalwa Daraniki Association Incorporated -
representative body of the Kulaluk and Minmarama Park
communities**

1.1 The Gwalwa Daraniki Association, established in 1973, is the formal representative body of the Larrakia and other residents of the Kulaluk and Minmarama Park communities. In 1995, we number about 155 people.

1.2 Core families have traditionally occupied this country and have traditional affiliation to the area. We protect a number of areas and sites of traditional Aboriginal significance within our lease boundaries. Some of these are recorded by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, including a cemetery currently used by our community, a pukamani place (burial site of ancestors) and a guabibi ground (ceremonial area), as well as sacred springs and other important sites.

1.3 Our community is located on Crown Lease No. 671, leased in perpetuity to the Gwalwa Daraniki Association Incorporated. It is located between the suburbs of Ludmilla and Coconut Grove at the western end of the Darwin airport, approximately seven kilometres from the central business district.

**2. Our aspirations for our future: sustainable economic
development for the social, cultural and environmental well-being
of our community and our neighbours**

2.1 Our coastal position, overlooking Beagle Gulf, warrants careful planning of our marine and estuarine eco-systems for a sustainable future.

2.2 We are seeking to establish a small-scale, community controlled eco-cultural tourism project which would be located along the coastline to utilise the marine and estuarine environments sustainably. Between low and high water mark, there is a rich diversity of eco-systems: mangroves, beaches, monsoon vine forests, grasslands and open woodlands, salt flats and intertidal mud flats.

2.3 We want to share our small, beautiful homeland with visitors. Guided by Larrakia people, visitors would see and learn about our

eco-system, land and sea scape and their cultural and environmental values through direct experience and interpretation of our culture and customs, history and heritage, and our relationships with our natural environment. These tours would explain the ethnobotanical significance of the local plants, their cultural, medicinal and nutritional values, and the traditional hunting and gathering techniques.

2.4 Our Kulaluk Eco Cultural Tourism Concept Plan documents our aim of establishing employment, educational, environmental and commercial opportunities for the well-being of our community. A major aim of our planning for community development is to provide employment for Larrakia (and other Aboriginal people who live in Larrakia society) to managing our commercial, environmental and cultural resources.

2.5 Through the success of our community initiatives we hope to bring benefits to our neighbours in the vicinity.

3. Regeneration and conservation of the Ludmilla Creek catchment area and surrounding environment

3.1 A major benefit we hope to achieve for our community and our neighbours is the conservation of the flora, fauna and local eco-systems. Environmental regeneration and restitution is a key phase of our development plan through site planning that is sensitive to the natural attributes of the land, waterways and coastal areas. The cultural, environmental and historical interpretation of our community and traditional land would be based on research, both scientific and social.

3.2 We propose to undertake a comprehensive land management plan for the Ludmilla Creek region as well as our immediate land to achieve our plan.

3.3 We have discussed this land management planning proposal with the members of the Ludmilla Creek Landcare group, Ken McFarlane and Ilana Eldridge, both of whom agree that the regeneration and conservation of the Ludmilla Creek catchment area, particularly the headwaters and the mouth of the river, will have a long term benefit for the Larrakia and other residents of the

area. They are committed to giving their technical assistance to this project.

4. Proposed commercial and economic plans

4.1 We have planned for our economic future to ensure the well-being and stability of our community. Our community development plan includes other commercial proposals to guarantee our participation in the Darwin economy.

4.2 Since 1993, we have had a successful lease agreement with the McDonald's restaurant on Bagot Road in the eastern part our lease. (part lot 5182) This development forms the anchor tenancy for future planned developments.

4.3 This part of the lease is comprised of open savannah grassland and woodland on which we propose to develop a range of tourist accommodation facilities, such as a motel, holiday apartments, a restaurant and tourist village. A water theme park, a par three, nine hole golf course and golf driving range are also proposed for the site.

4.4 In order to achieve our goals, Gwalwa Daraniki Association Incorporated concluded an Development Agreement with Vysrose Pty Ltd in 1992. Vysrose Pty Ltd is a local Darwin company whose work with our community has been of a high standard. Despite the Government's opposition, our association with Vysrose's principal, Mr David Smith, has resulted in the significant success of the McDonald's Agreement with our community association.

5. The Northern Territory Government's opposition to our economic development

5.1 In August 1993, a Consent Use, under the existing R6 zoning for the McDonald's Restaurant, and SU (SpecialUse) Rezoning applications were submitted to the Town Planning Authority by Vysrose Pty Ltd, in accordance with our development Agreement. The Town Planning Authority gave approval to exhibit the Draft Planning Instrument for a rezoning to SU to allow for the Light Industrial components of the development under the Darwin Town Plan. The Consent Use application for McDonald's restaurant was approved, while the rezoning application for other aspects of our proposed commercial developments was overturned by the Minister

continues

for Lands and Aboriginal Development, the Hon. Steve Hatton, MLA. Both applications concerned the same block of land and closely associated aspects of the same proposal.

5.2 Gwalwa Daraniki members regard the Minister's interference as unfair and discriminatory.

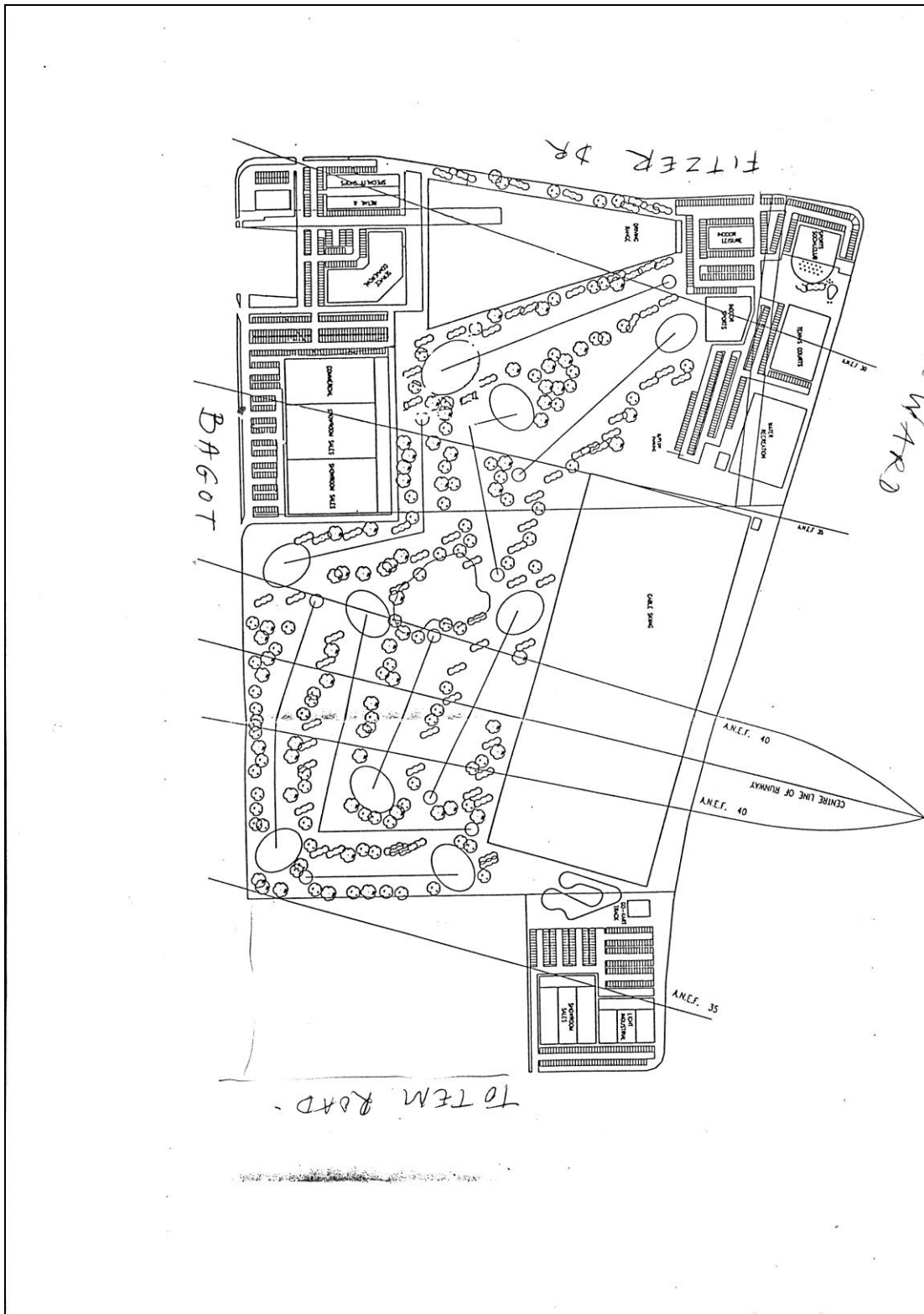
5.3 A major obstacle in the path of our efforts to achieve socio-economic self determination is the weight of the RAAF lobby to the NT government, in order to impose stricter standards upon the development of our land, than are required under the National Town Planning, Land Use Compatibility guidelines for aircraft affected areas, encompassed within AS 2021.

5.4 The proposed development site at part lot 5182, Bagot Road, experienced noise levels, at that time, in excess of 25 ANEF, (Aircraft Noise Exposure Forecast) therefore making it unsuitable for noise sensitive development, the conceptual development was hence prepared by Vysrose P/L, in consultation with the Gwalwa Daraniki Association, taking this into consideration in order to fully comply with AS 2021.

5.5 At a meeting convened by Steve Hatton MLA, ex Minister for Lands & Aboriginal Development, after the Town Planning Authority had already recommended the exhibition of a Draft SU Planning Instrument, due to the subjective safety concerns raised by the RAAF and the FAC, it was agreed that Vysrose P/L would consult further with both the RAAF and the FAC, in order to fully address their concerns, although these had previously been formally addressed within the SU Rezoning and Consent Use Development Applications Preliminary Environmental Report.

5.6 Vysrose P/L therefore further commissioned an authoritative report by a Melbourne firm, Airplan, to assess the impact from airport operations and address any technical problems that may have arisen from the proposed development. Both the RAAF and the FAC were consulted and on the basis of these discussions, concessionary modifications to the proposed rezoning application were made.

5.7 Unfortunately, when Vysrose P/L wrote to the Minister and the RAAF and FAC, to inform them of the forthcoming Airplan report, the Airplan report, once finalised, could not be considered by the Town Planning Authority, as their recommendation to the



9.9 (Above) Map attached to Gwalwa Daraniki Association Inc and Vysrose Pty Ltd (1997), *Kulaluk Development Proposal: development brief for the development Part Lot 5182, Bagot Road Town of Darwin* showing golf course, motels and hotel.