

LONGGRASS

Issue 3 October 2003

A way of life.



Shirley, Bonita, Jimmy and Johnny October 2003

Longgrass people are mainly Aboriginal family groups living in bush areas throughout the Darwin region.

There can be up to a thousand people camping out on any one night in the Darwin area.

This includes old people, young adults and children, many have disabilities and health problems,

alcohol/drug problems and mental health problems underpinned by long term poverty.

Longgrass Association is an informal network of Longgrass people, their families and friends which gives a voice for the hundreds of voiceless individuals and family groups that live in the Longgrass either by choice or by circumstance.

We promote the human rights of Longgrass people to be treated with the same dignity and respect as other community members.

This includes the right to access to water, adequate and appropriate shelter and the inalienable right to practice cultural obligations and ways of living.

Freedom to Sleep is an annual event that draws attention to the harassment, criminalisation of the lifestyle, racism and human rights abuses Longgrass people experience daily from authorities and now more often from the general public.

These attacks contributes to a constant state of living in crisis.

This year has been spurred by an aggressive media and government policing campaign to clear public spaces of homeless people which directly incites racism and vilification of indigenous peoples rights' across the Northern Territory.

"Black people can't access public space now without getting incredible attention. The minute a blackfella walks into a shopping centre, they're targeted, they are watched, they are observed, they are moved on if they so much as sit on a pavement.

"It's quite blatant. It's discriminatory, it really should not be allowed in this day and age. We're dealing with blind racism." June Gunluckii Nimul Mills
- Larrakia Elder see page see pg 17

A way of life continued

Last year the Itinerant Project was launched by the Northern Territory Government to provide pathways out of the camping lifestyle.

However enormous political pressure has brought a cloud of intense and relentless policing, leading to double standard.

While the aggressive policing of people continues, there is an obvious void of any genuine commitment to respect, dignity or human rights for this very vulnerable group in our community.

Northern Territory has the highest percentage of homeless than any other state in Australia.

The Longgrass CD is inspired by the 2002 *Freedom to Sleep* concert. Sixteen original songs about living in the Longgrass from mostly Longgrass people.

We hope to draw national attention to Northern Territory Governments' shocking response to the growing population of people living in the Longgrass in Darwin.

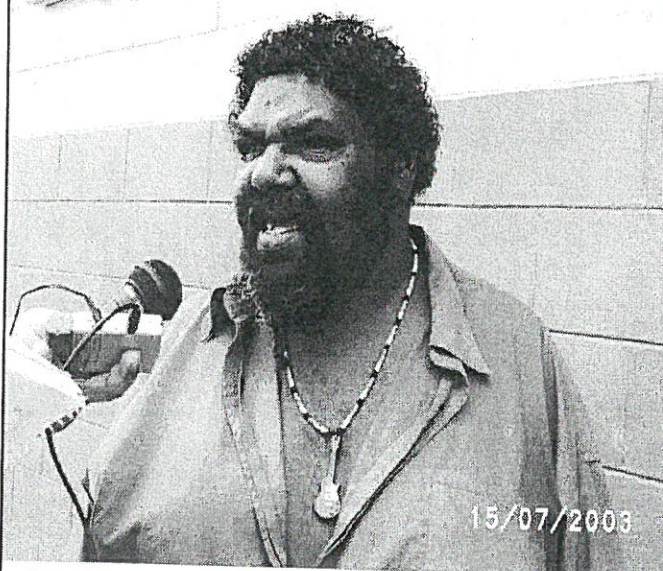
Through this unique and significant documentation of Longgrass living culture.

The Longgrass LIVE CD will be launched at the 2003 *Freedom to Sleep* on 7th of November (see back page).

Longgrass LIVE CD will be on SALE at the 2003 **Freedom to Sleep** Concert and after the 7th Nov at **CITY HiFi** on Knuckey St, near the Mall, **Radio Larrakia** 89482711 and **Sounds of Music**, Casuarina Square.

The Longgrass LIVE CD Project received \$4000 from Community Benefits Fund for some production costs - Thankyou.

David Luta – Song - Korda Ka



David Luta recording and interview at Malak Arts Space

"This is Uncle Roxy's [it's about] why everybody disappears from Ti and Qld coast and ends up on the streets." See page 18 for complete song list

Longgrass Magazine's intention are:

- * to give voice to the voiceless people in our community.
- * to educate the mainstream public about the ongoing racism and discrimination that people living in the longgrass and indigenous people generally experience on a daily basis.
- * To promote respect, dignity and a responsibility of care inclusive to the whole community.

The interviews you read in Longgrass Magazine are the opinions and experiences of the people that tell them. Some people choose to change their name or not put their name at all, for their own security and safety.

Longgrass Magazine is unfunded and put together by volunteers. Donations are sought for the continued production of the **Magazine** and towards the costs of putting on the **2003 FREEDOM TO SLEEP/ Longgrass LIVE CD launch**

Contact Cindy or Stella to find out how. Cindy 0407794085 or stella@dcls.org.au

Longgrass Magazine thanks Leonie Norrington, Marita, Stan, Cindy, Helen, Rasili, NT Shelter and DCLS for making it happen again.

If you want to write us a letter, pls send to

Longgrass Association C/- GPO Darwin, NT 0801

<http://www.geocities.com/kujuk2001/>

<http://longgrass.tripod.com>

Please feel free to make copies and distribute this magazine

- * *Cops burn people's possessions*
- * *Council workers kick old people.*
- * *One mile dam up-date.*
- * *Heavy drinkers need mobile health service.*
- * *Black people not welcome in The Mall.*
- * *Dialysis patient bashed.*
- * *"Blind Racism" - June Mills speaks out.*
- * *CD song-list.*
- * *'Im paid to be a longgrasser.'*
- * *What happened to human rights?*

Cops Burn People's Possessions

Cops, why they burn my mattress, clothes, all my handbag and everything?

Noel, Nelson and JP 3rd Sept 2003

Note: Names have been changed for security reasons

Noel: That was 3 weeks back. We made it our camp to stay and they came and they told us to move out from here - this not your camp area to stay here.

Why they do that to us? And they have to go tell me and my husband - get up from this mattress and they took it on the fire. They drag it and they burn it all my swag, it all gone in the fire, in my fire - camp.

And we was there sitting and we had one moselle and they busted our grog with knife.

They busted my grog first before they took my mattress on the fire - camp. My mattress and my blanket, everything's burnt and my clothes. I had a bag - them coppers put that on the fire.

Night Patrol all right they respecting us - they know - they understanding to us now.

JP: Other coppers they alright, but them two - ones with the dark colour (Aboriginal) and that long guy. They push us every joint to joint.

Noel: You know, we are here, we are human being people. We know how to stay in the bush. We live in the grass.

Nelson: He told bullshit story that I was spearing one of the coppers, but I did not, I was just holding it - fish wire (fishing spear).

I wanted to go hunting. This guy he made up story. I was in prison last couple of weeks ago and I still have to go court because of bullshit talk.

Q: How long were you in prison?

Nelson: Only from Friday to Monday I went to court and I got bail and they told me to go back again for court. But nothing really happen. I got witness here.

Update 23 Sept: Nelson is now doing time in Berrimah gaol for this problem now.

Noel: Night time police come round. Only all the conservation mob every day - they say to us mob, just clean up your mess and move.

But you know our ceremony - we acting as all the elders, what they done before, before these houses was built. We don't have to pay money - it's free, free, free. Cook our food; hunt for anything, that is our life. This is my opinion; you understand what I'm saying?

wanted to cook it but conservation came round - it's not yours any more it's mine (they said)

That's wrong, they don't eat that thing we do. They say if you want to hunt you go hunt your own country, but in Darwin - don't hunt.



Q: When they burnt your stuff, what sort of things did they burn?

Noel: Everything, my mattress and sheet. ID as well and key cards. They getting really hard now. I can say that, especially those two coppers now.

One black one - woman and the long tall one. They kick us everywhere and move us out.

Noel: When they come round they always boss us around.

JP: They know all us mob.

Nelson: No camping here, move from here to here, but where can we move? If we go to the street there, there's maybe some white blokes, they will loose something on us.

That's why we hiding here (bush). We like to live life, as I said we acting as our elders.

We from the sea and we love to hunt. We eat that thing, we don't waste it.

Three weeks back a turtle went out, lay egg, one person turn him round. We

You just fish, that's what they said. But in my opinion that's our food, we don't waste it. European's should realise how people was acting before they built those houses.

Noel: It's rain now and why those people coming all the City Council, they going to the shop when we lining up sleeping there. We looking for shelter to stay.

JP: And the owner of the shop he always tell us - you can camp here as long as you looking after my shop and City Council comes around (saying) you not allowed to camp here.

Nelson: And this hostel here - they don't like Longgrass people. It's Aboriginal Hostel and we want to book a room but they refused the money.

JP: No you not allowed to camp here, that's what they all tell us. Why these people refuse to put us in there?

continued overleaf

Cops burn possessions

Noel: But we getting angry because you know why?

Why they don't want me to stay there in the hostel, we ask them and all the time they refuse.

Nelson: Policy they should say come in but they refuse. This is one thing that is wrong here in Darwin.

They don't let us stay in Hostel. Coppers moving us around. City council, conservation - everybody - where can we stay.

Noel: City Council they see us sleeping there at shop out from rain, they going there and they dobbing us for fine. When they see us they give us the fine.

JP: We not sleeping in Public park - we sleeping in the scrub, we sleeping past hospital. Even in Lee Point they push us out from there, make us come back in town here.

Noel: they playing games with us, they thinking we are dumb people, but we know how to stay in the bush. We can make hunt, we can go fish and throwing (net).

Nelson: European they change the rules every year. But Blacks don't change the rules. It's from the beginning and pass it over to kids.

JP: Same law it goes over and over, never changes. We still got the same law from our grand grand father, keep passing over. We still live in the same step, we never change.

Nelson: European people they change.

They have a culture but they have a book - paper and they change their culture.

But not us we have it in our mind and in our heart and we still got until someone gunna die.

Maybe me or anybody but pass it on to the kids and they still have it.

Noel: and these white people they coming and rushing us - why?

And why they burn my mattress and clothes and all my handbag and everything?

They just making us getting more heavy on alcohol

Mary - 30 August 03

Moonangah / Balanda - their not allowed to eat food that we eat. But like we Aboriginal people, that's our culture, our tribal law - everything.

But they keep stopping us see; they shouldn't do that because it's our food for centuries.

They say, 'you can't hunt around here but hey, that's our food, that's Aboriginal food we been eat before they been settle here in Aust and it's getting hard for us Aboriginal people now.

Like when we want to go eat, catch a turtle, you got somebody to stop you.

We know it's breeding season and all that, Aboriginal people we do it year round. It's our culture, it's our system, it's got nothing to do with the white.

Their trying to protect it, but they can't stop us Aboriginal people - that's it, can't break that out of us.

I come from my home town. I come live with my mother's side family - Maningrida all this mob.

I come stop here. I see how Policeman, how they treat them. They just tell them, 'hey don't drink here, go somewhere else', round about 9 to 10am.

Q: Do they tell you where you can go? No, just go somewhere else. From 10am City Council and Night patrol mob, they come and spy around.

That's when they start telling all the Policeman ah - they drinking here and there, this spot, this spot.

That's when we get hassle from Policeman.

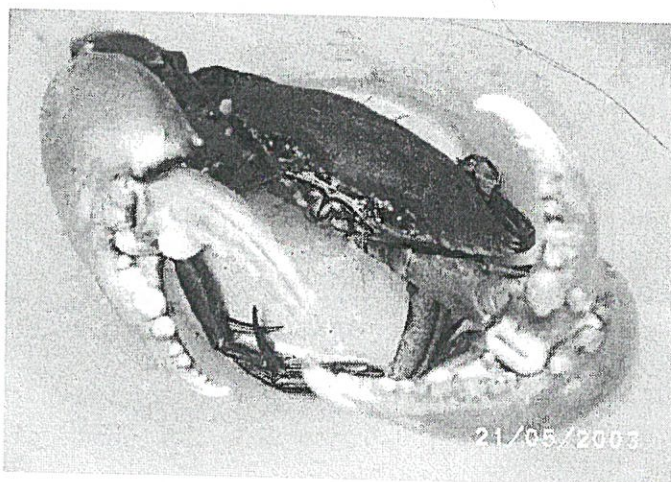
They come round bust beer and grog.

They making us spend a lot of money, busting our grog.

Make us come back, buy em, make us go back, bust it again.

Instead they should tell us go somewhere we can drink.

Q: What's likely to happen today? Coppers he just tell us get up, move or



I'll bust your grog right now.

To tell you the truth it makes us drink more faster. When police come round here, like bust grog, as soon as they leave they just go buy nother moselle, come back, fill em up.

We just scull em, drink, drink, drink. They just making us getting more heavy on alcohol

They where saying to us, 'why don't you get a job and find a place', but that's how Aboriginal people been living.

They getting greedy for money, just because we been living la humpy, you name it. Till today we still living the longgrass, they not going to stop us.

That's Moonangah/ Balanda culture - look all the houses. We been living hut through the rain, cold weather, every season, we go through, Aboriginal people - that's our generation.

Longgrass - that's how we been live many many years. Our grandfathers used to stay in Darwin, long time ago.

Darwin City Council Kicks 5 people awake on 1st August 03.

Note: Names have been changed for security reasons

Interview with Rona, Naree, Alison and Dave

Rona: Six months camp here. City Council tell us to move, we did that and the other city council told us to come back here. They been moving us backwards and forwards. We getting sick and tired of them.

Four City Council - Phil and Gary / Ashley and Brian.

Dave: They came round about quarter past 5 in the morning.

Rona: They had the spotlight (torch) on us. Waking people up with the frying pan.

We told the City Council wait till they get up - then we can move. He started booting them with his foot. He been hit that old man Albert, that's Jack's older brother - he can't hear when you talk to him.

He was kicking my cousin sister May and her husband Frank.

Naree: "You mob black bastards. We didn't tell you mob to stay here. We told you to move yesterday." He just called them black bastard.

Rona: And he booted the fire. All the ashes been fly. Those ashes were lands on one of the sheet.

That sheet been burnt and Jacks wife been burnt here. (neck) shoulder.

That coals been go there.

Alison: I was sleep with old man and my daughter. I was slept there and they kicked me. Little shorty one - city council, he kicked me.

Naree: Gary, he don't (kick us). He always give us smart answers like if you don't clean that block up, you's are out of here.

Gary said we're are going to check on the

place and see if it is clean. And they went and checked - but they found out it was already clean.

They went away and they came back the next day and they just told us to move.

They think they own the bush. They think they create the bush.

That copper Mark said they was playing rugby with us.

Rona: Coppers they was all right.

Naree: They wasn't using bad language or anything. (Coppers)

Rona: Only City Council. Spin dry mob; bring coffee for us in the morning - every Friday.

They help us carry all the gear backwards and forwards.

Q. What do you want me to do with this complaint?

continued overleaf

Harold Porkilari Song - Jamuwulampi

Song about my country and animals, like hunt for them, like water buffalo and wallabies, turtle, dugong, fish - everything from salt water and bush tucker and the land himself.

Reminds me of that land because, (in Darwin) living in the bush and close up to the sea and sleeping beside the fire, that's why I picked that song.

Long time now (been living in Darwin) six or five years. (Authorities) I want them to not doing that.

Not allow pushing people around, chasing people around, no good. Person he wanna get his way, he wanna do something - that is wrong - not allowed.

Like tell us to move, like that, move to another place. I tell them, I got no money to put all our gear in a minibus.

They still tell us, just I don't care what you mob doing, just get the hell out of here, just move somewhere else. Every morning when they come, especially city council.

It's only us in the longgrass, but we love our longgrass too. Longgrass people, people living in the city longgrass and Tiwi, Casuarina, Marrara where that creek is everywhere - Palmerston too.

I was living in longgrass in Palmerston, we had a problem there too with the city council, so I shift back, 'nother problem again. So, not only us but all of our longgrass people all over town, bush.



James Yarmilar (Harold) Richard Dudanga - recording at East Point

I used to go visit that old man from Maningrida from Palmerston. Drink with him where that pipeline, top. And walk back to town - Palmerston, go back to another place, longgrass.

Q. Do you think they can sent everybody back to communities?

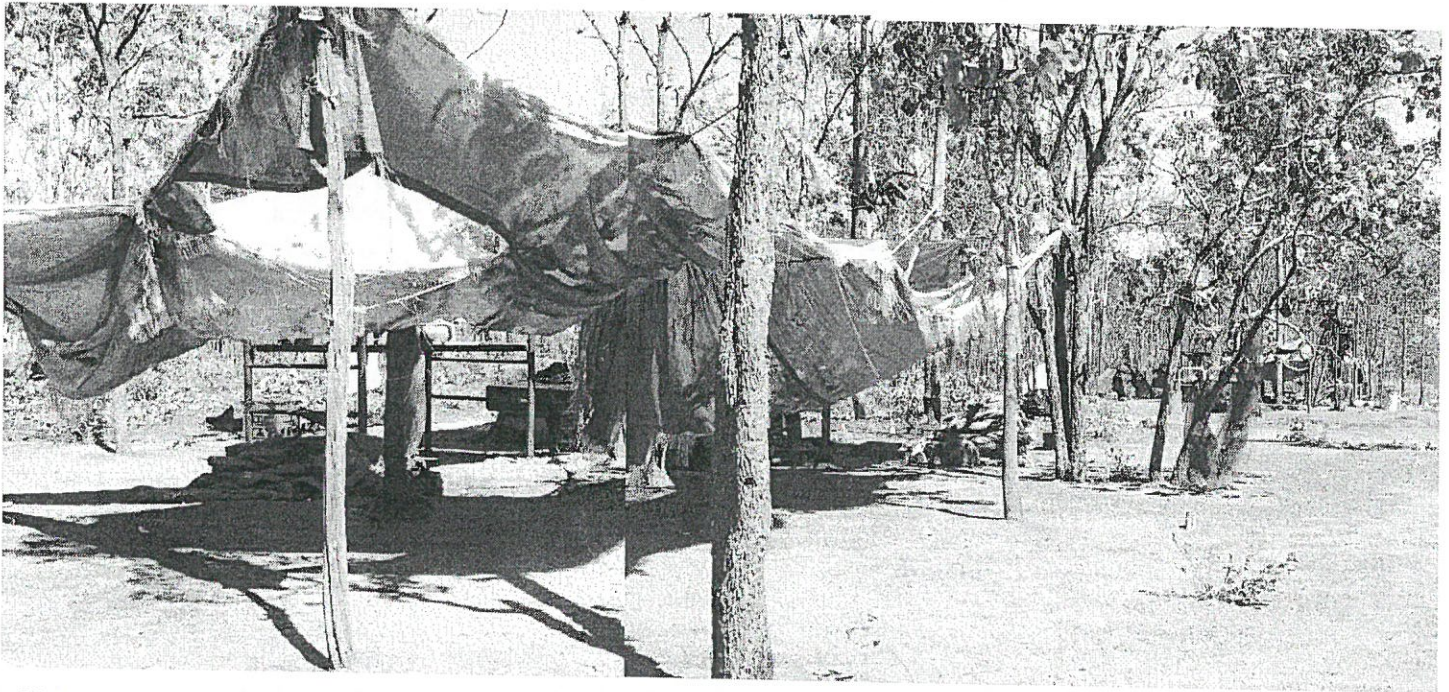
I don't think so. Like I said, not allowed pushing these people around, that is wrong. What do you want from us? Don't like another people telling us move, no good.

I'm Tiwi Islander - Totem skin is 'Skellymulet' - Fish, and I come out from my mother's skin - that's my mother's skin and my father's countrymen - my country, like Jamuwulampi - that's my land.

I'm bit of Larrakia too. Well, long time Tiwi mob used to come here dug out canoe stealing Larrakia women from here, take back.

This story in my family.

Darwin City Council Kicks five people awake cont.



Naree: I want them to loose their job. I want them to go back to their normal life.

Q They're prejudice. They didn't create the bush. They just only know how to give people a hard time.

Rona: We are the longgrass people and you know it yourself, they should leave us alone - longgrass people.

We know how to clean up the area. We feel no good when they push us back and forward.

About 20 people in this camp, mainly from Bathurst Island - but me myself, I'm from Maningrida and Naree from Borrooloola. One from Bagot - we all mixed up family.

Dave: We all look after one another, share tucka, we clean everything put it in bin.

Naree: White people should realise things. Aboriginal people got more say than whites. Aboriginal was the first one.

We should all be family and friends because we all made from dirt, doesn't matter any sort of a colour. We all made of dust, we shouldn't be prejudice.

Interview with Jack and Jill

Jill: We was sleeping, me and Jack. His brother (Albert) that side.

He (Phil) woke me and Jack up first with the ash. He just come and kicked that ash. I felt that burning, stinging here on my neck and shoulder, we was sleeping.

Then he went to Albert then. Tell him to get up but he couldn't hear - he's deaf. Then he start kicking him.

We all seen it. 1 / 2 time kicking Albert. He was hitting the ground with frypan, breaking the handle.

Jack: Making noise

Jill: They call the cops. If you mob won't move ...coz we was back talking to them and they called the cops. Two police came, we told them what happened.

Jack: They told us to press charges. One of them he understood Tiwi language.

Jill: They came here (after the kickings) and they told us to move bit further (into mangrove)

Jack: To many sandflies. That was yesterday that other bloke - not Phil, they got the new one - and Gary.

Two old people come here City Council, talking about Phil.

They said they heard about that and he showed me that book - City Council rules, you know. That book tell him bout press charge on him. Complaint on him.

Interview with Brenda and John

John: There was about 10 people, we was all asleep. When the police come, then we told the police what happened.

The police said you can press charges on him. And Phil just sat like this. He didn't say anything. Shaking to, bit shaking.

We was up him, all of us, we growled him. You shouldn't do that what happened to the girl - burning people. We told the cops, he just sat down. His partner Gary was standing up. This one now Phil, he didn't say a thing. We was just worry that he was a bit shaky to when we explain to the cops what happen.

Brenda: Monday (11th Aug) he been come (after kickings) here, (Phil and Gary).

J: He told us to move further in, but there's mangroves in there, can't go in there. They told us to move back to Spot on Marine but Groote mob there.

Question: Any apology from Phil?

J: Na. He just said they could see us from there, there's 2 / 3 hills there, we hidden. They try move us coz they could see us, that's what they said.

Question: What do you want to say to them?

J: Don't push us around, they keep on pushing us around.

B: Night Patrol he said he might be leave you mob alone coz your not doing anything.

J: We told him the story what happened, they weren't happy about it. They said, they shouldn't do that, cops should charge them. They been come bringing water, coffee and tea. They help us move back and forward with all our stuff. They're sick of it to. What he said, their boss gonna talk to City Council. Find out for us mob.

B: May and Frank they got kicked to and Evon and Alison and old Albert - they just kicked him in the leg, Come on, get up, get up, get up, get up.

J: Frank got upset. He was gonna punch him (Phil). No, no don't do that he might get more worser. We got sick woman - Evon, she got the tablets. I call them Mum Aboriginal way.

End Note

DCC did not make any attempt to interview longgrass people about what happened. The DCC did not deny that people were kicked but simply stated that they had found conduct to be 'appropriate'. The handling of this complaint continued to send a message that the voices of longgrass people do not count, and are not to be respected. If this complaint had come from a wealthy business person, would the response have been the same?

People forced out of town live in a dangerous state of neglect and silence - 1 Mile Dam.

David Timber 25th Aug 03

I got a visit from the chairperson of ATSIC Darwin, Eddie John Cubillo. He mentioned something to me about funding for houses.

They're in the process of looking into the housing situation here at 1 Mile Dam. He mentioned something about the type and quality of houses.

There are more people here now than there was 3/4 months ago, I said to him.

Especially from the Alice Springs area who used to sit round Raintree Park day in day out. For the last 3/4 months they've moved here.

A lot of them asked me if they could stay here and a lot of them are pretty well happy now that they have moved in. We've got big mobs of people.

I said to Eddie John Cubillo, we could do with more houses now.

That mob who have been living on the outskirts of town, in the coffee bushes, in tents, especially that mob from the other end in the camp-

Yeah they find it's somewhere to stay. They got a roof over their head. It will be the rain time soon and most of these mob will have shelter.

But the trouble is overcrowding in the houses. You got 3 or 4 couples in a house and you've got people coming in from out of town.

Well you get overcrowding; they start arguing especially when they have been drinking. But it's not so bad here coz I have a talk to them if they start getting out of hand - arguing and carrying on.

Lot of em are pretty well happy. I've been asked by a lot of these outsiders if the can have a house.

I have to tell them, we've only got 5 houses and you can't stay. I'm sorry about that - we could do with more houses. Old Steve for instance, they have been pushed out of East Point where they were staying.



Andrina Wundjar - Four years I been stopping on one mile dam.

Everytime they move somewhere, police come and move them on or the council people.

And he stays here. It's not only one from that group, it's 2 or 3 couples from where they stayed in the group.

They moved here but they find it very hard - they like their privacy and space, but you can't do that within a house that is occupied by 3 or 4 other couples.

I heard that governments given Bernie Valadian (Aboriginal Development Foundation) some money towards Knuckey Lagoon camp in Berrimah, towards this itinerant mob so people can move there.

But right now there is a lot of fighting from outside people, that is a problem to Knuckeys. You got people going there, itinerant people to, tend to make trouble for the original people who stay there. That's a bit of a problem.

It's reassuring that the chairman of ATSIC came to see me but then I don't believe until I see things happen.

I been approached by lots of people

on this housing. They talk this and then they go away and that's the end of it.

They just pay you lip service and that's it. That's happened to me lots of times.

Well the Longgrass Magazine has got to a lot of people. Coz I've had response from people in the streets, even down Katherine the other day.

They said yeah, we seen your story, it's pretty good and when are you going to get the next magazine out? You get a lot of response from people, people you don't know sometimes.

We don't know what this governments doing either by supporting Bernie.

I don't think he'd have much to do with One Mile Dam any more, seeing that he's been negotiating with the government - kicking us out of here.

He probably wouldn't have anything to do with us when it comes to this itinerant money.

They'd be more than 30 now - 50 maybe. But it grows just about every day. We get more people coming in. You don't even know who they are.

Letter sent to NT Governments,
Itinerants Project, ADF and ATSIC
25th Sept 2003

Over the past three months we have had an influx of itinerants from the fringes of town. One mile Dam has had an increase of numbers of over fifty people. We believe this is as a result of the Itinerant Project.

The facilities of the camp were already overloaded with the existing forty residents. There are three operating toilets in the whole town camp, all the others are in disrepair and have been blocked off or welded up. With the increased population people are beginning to use the bushes, which is an extreme health risk.

We have many families with kids who have just moved into the camp. We want to address the neglect of facilities as extremely urgent.

In light of the population of itinerant people moving in from town, we believe it is the responsibility of the Itinerant Project to improve camp facilities. While we are happy to accommodate people, we cannot continue increasing the population of the camp to the risk of health standards.

We have spoken to many people, and written many letters, and it is not acceptable to ignore our requests for information and action. We are writing to you because we would like an urgent response from you on this matter.

Thank you in anticipation of your response,

David Timber
One Mile Dam

In response to this letter,

Leon Morris of the Itinerant Project came to 1 Mile Dam. David was able to show him the facilities and their state of dysfunction and neglect.

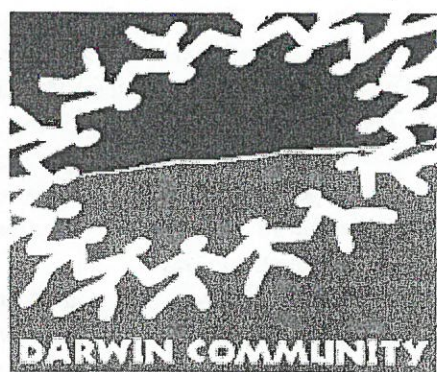
A worker from ADF appeared on 3rd October and started work on the main ablution block, unwelding a number of doors after two years.

He was working at getting these closed off amenities functional again. It was unclear as to whether the ablution blocks will have the power reconnected by ADF.

1 Mile Dam is still waiting to be recognised as the major, if not the only suitable accommodation provider to the longgrass population that is being harassed out of the Mall and the City area.

To date there has been no assistance or recognition of the role 1 Mile Dam and its permanent residence play by accommodating a population of people larger than themselves - while their housing, living conditions and security of tenure is in such a dangerous state of neglect and silence.

James Yarnmilar Song - Gurrawla



FREE LEGAL

ADVICE

ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Stuart Park

**Every Monday at
Breakfast**

Free call 1800812953



I was live at Crocker Island but my real country at Maningrida settlement. Im Kunibidji (clan) Gurrawla - when the tide comes in, I made this song that why I'm singing this song for that

brother that pass away, my cuz brother. I made it at Fannie Bay beach when I see the tide was coming. Three or four years back, that brother was playing guitar with me and I was singing away.

Letters

Editor NT News
(unpublished) 21/8/03

I refer to the T-shirt "White Girls can't hump" worn by Richard bell.

A number of years ago I saw the film "white men can't jump".

I was inspired to look at myself and do some soul searching and look at my inadequacies.

I came away with a better attitude to life.

Richard bells statement made me laugh because it was so true.

He had the courage to state the obvious, what white men thought but where to afraid to say out load.

White women lack confidence in their sexuality.

They are trying to act and think like men.

A new gender has been created in our society, denying femaleness while not quite achieving manhood.

You can react to Richard's statement with anger and bitterness, or you can allow yourself to be inspired to look at yourself afresh and come away with a better attitude to life.

Much is our suffering in this society is self-inflicted due to wrong attitudes.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

Rodney R

C/- Poste Restante
GPO Darwin

We're better off here



Helen: Sometimes we walk or catch the mini-bus for fishing

Helen 3rd Sept 03

Since Ninya (Dad) went to Juninga we stayed here, wet and dry. Sometimes it's quiet or busy, no argue.

Sometimes friend comes round, give us kangaroo and sit down, nice quiet, long way from shop.

Sometime we walk or catch the minibus.

We need somebody to help us collect the rubbish, make it real nice. Sometime white people come round and look, ah nice place.

I sometimes go and see family mob, tell them come and stay with us, long way from Night Patrol or Policeman or City Council, bust em moselle for them.

All the Marrara mob to there my family from Nakara side.

I been thinking about big tent, Get bunk from rubbish dump, put mattress on top for when the rain comes.

It's a safe place. First time the other week Night patrol came round here bought us water.

They all right, long as they pick up old man and take him back Juninga.

Family house (Territory Housing) too much - make a lot of noise - just go.

Me and husband always tell them, 'alright, we go, we got camp to stay, better off.'

If we go and stay with family, 'ah - I might call Policeman. I might call Night Patrol, go there, sober up'.

Better off stay here.

Family come round visit me for a couple a days or weeks before go back (community).

Health Mob - We want them to come here.

My husband was sick with skin problem.

Sometime we might get chest problem in the wet.

We need somebody to come visit us and talk health like that.

We get cockles; sometimes we go here and get some long neck turtle.

Sometime we go fishing over there and come back home.

But we waiting for plum, this one's growing up, different, different season.

The most in need of mobile health service is the heavy drinkers.

Interview with Susan 30th Aug 2003

Last year we felt safe 'cause a lot of them, Conservation, they let us stay in safe place and they didn't want us to move other places, cause of safety.

This year, it's different from last year. We find hard times with City Council also conservation cause I think when we were living at Lim's a couple of months ago, we had some friends in conservation - they were friendly to us.

They let us stay there at Lim's, but other conservation - they didn't want us to stay and they reported to police.

So we had a fight, some people from Lajamanu friends, family they came stayed with us.

They can't really help us anymore. They changed the rules these days now. We not allowed to camp on the beaches anymore.

They tell us to go and look for families or relatives that got a house in Darwin. But it's a bit crowded, when we go family and see them.

Stay there it's a bit crowded. Cause a lot of families come from Galiwinku, so it's a bit hard to find accommodation.

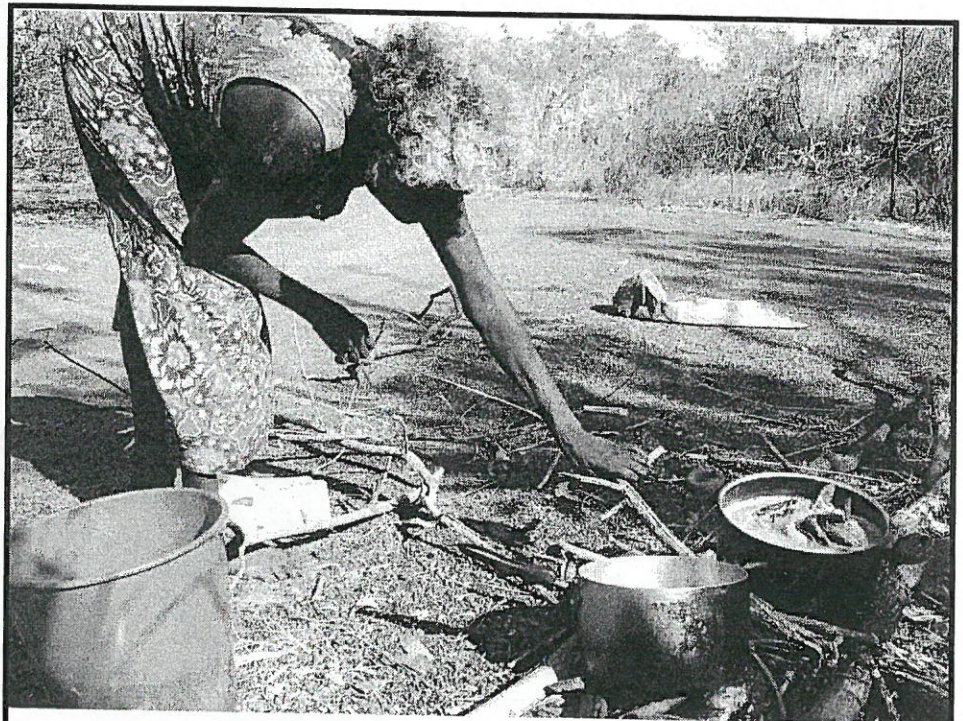
First thing, early in the morning, they say "roll up your swags, you're not allowed to camp here, we don't want to see you here again."

It's just like cat and mouse, playing games, chasing each other around like mice and they are like cats - they trying to keep us away from Darwin.

Different camp we go, we move around, different camp everyday. We carrying our bags.

We know the rules are getting harder, so every tribe group is getting together, making one big family and giving ideas, sharing ideas how to live this hard rules.

It's just like cat and mouse, playing



We don't want to go back home - this is our lifestyle

games, chasing each other around like mice and they are like cats - they trying to keep us away from Darwin.

Go home - They saying that to us but we tell them "we don;t want to go back home, this is our lifestyle, we have to stay like this all the time".

Q: There's dialysis mob, there's old people, but who are the other groups that need regular medical checking up?

Especially the young people who drink. The most in need of mobile service is the heavy drinkers.

They drink a lot and they don;t know what's happening inside their body. They keep on drinking then next minute, they're dead.

And the family - what happened? He's young. What happened?

Last time I talked about taking longgrass people at weekends we could go in 2 groups.

First day could go out hunting - take them hunting for a day then next day men would go out just to get them away from drinking.

Give them chance for a rest.

At the same time, it's a chance to talk about health issues.

People need things to do like playing sports, have bbqs, maybe music, same time talk to them about health problems.

How many family in your group do you try and look after?

It's very hard. 20 people?

It's more than that. From different, different family you know how we got extended family, we got family in Milingimbi, we got family in Maningrida, Lake Evala, Golburn Island, Ramininging, Yirrikala.

It's very hard when we got big mob of family to look after. It's very hard.

My husband, he was sick couple of days ago and he had fever, high temperature.

So we have to catch a minibus to take him to renal unit yesterday.

We might check him up cause he's on 3 times a week dialysis.

For medical visit you could let me know what time you coming.

So I could keep the group in one place, and tell them what's happening so when you come, there are people available for checking up.

"If you got no business in the Mall, go to the Esplanade."

Collin K 25 Sept 2003

When you seen me in town that day, the cops came up to us, said, 'If you got no business in the Mall, got to the Esplanade.'

It seems pretty pointless putting chairs in the Mall, when you can't even use them.

Q. So, they're telling you to move?

Yeah! Just for sitting there, just for being there.

It's like they come round early, just to clear the mob out and a few mob did move,

I don't see why I should have to move, when I'm reading the paper in the Mall. They come round early part morning and clear everybody out.

They're not really rude or anything, they're just too abrupt, 'if you haven't got anything here to do, well, go away...', sort of thing. But not in them words.

They do it in a very condescending manner.

It's not very polite. If they are going to do something, at least do it with a smile on your face and a, 'I'm only doing my job...', sort of thing. But they make it very hard, they go out of their way to be very condescending to a lot of people.

They check people's bags in the mall. Even if you're just sitting there.

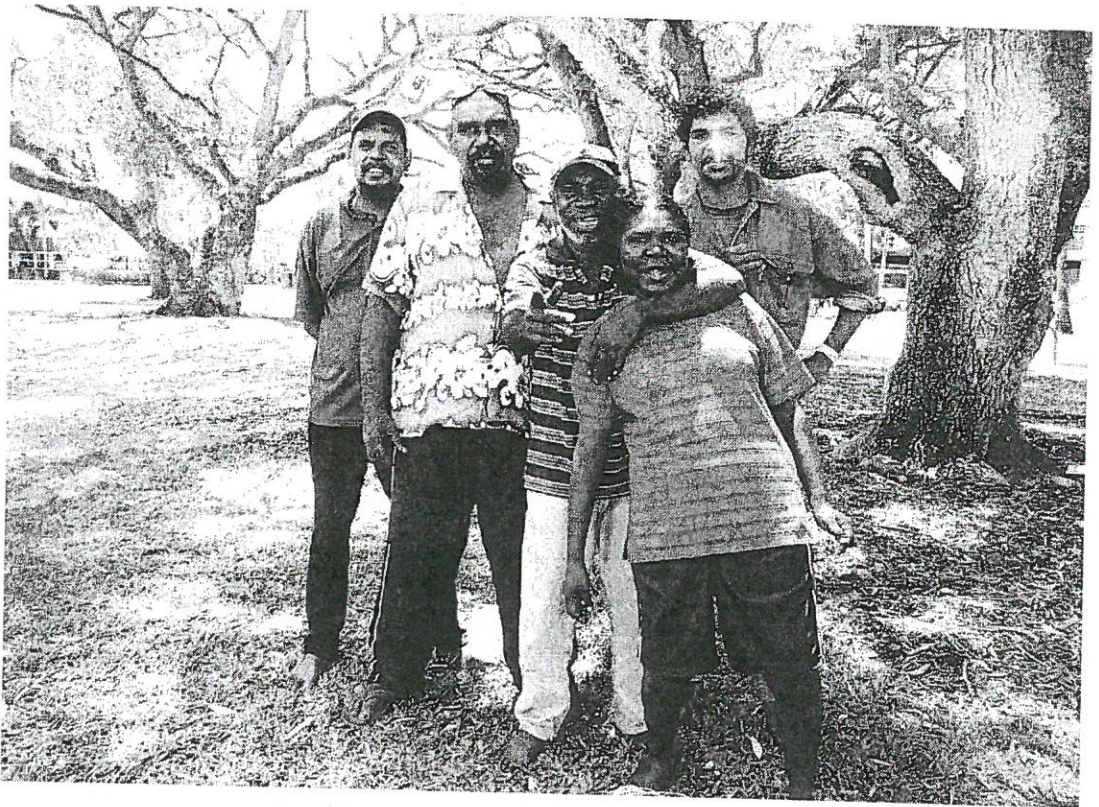
What's the big van they park in the mall? It's supposed to be look like a booze bus but I reckon there's cameras in there for sure checking everybody out. Why would they park it there?

They got their monitor somewhere else and when they need to be called in, they just go there and see people and clean us mob out.

Why else would they park it there? They got no other reason. It's been there for months.

When you're in the Mall and some people are sitting on the other side, they might be drinking, they'll say, just by association, because you're near people who are drinking, we got to search your bag, even if you're not drinking, just minding your own business. They think just by association, they've got the right to come over and ask you to tip your bag out.

If they want to do that, they've got to get



Big John and brothers at the Esplanade

consistence and check everybody's bag. Black, white, Chinese, doesn't matter.

Things have changed round the city, there's more fences, more security guards, more cops, there's more places that people can't get into, like some of the pubs round town. Even if you're clean in your pay day, they look at you hard, they don't let you in.

I was down at a camp - that was only about a week and a half ago. And they got a warning by council, saying that they had 24 hours to move all their gear.

Otherwise, fines - they were looking at several coz they had a camp there.

The thing about taking somebody's gear, they looked after the place, they took their own rubbish back up in the bins.

They did everything right, they give 'em 24 hours notice, even though they're doing the right thing. Down the beach, they're out of the way of the public eye, except when they are going to or coming from.

They're doing no harm at all, yet they got to get humbug by council with bylaws and 24 hours notice. It's just wrong. Why don't they wake up some of those people that come out from these nightclubs and give them \$55 fines for sleeping out, they just roll around in the bus stop.

Like the other day, 100 of 'em run a muck in the city - Discovery (nightclub), but you don't hear them getting fines. It's all the people in the camps.

It's just too many double standards in the government, in the way that some of the Larrakia people are thinking, too many double standards.

You only got to look at the Hells Angels - they got caught with a rocket launcher. What if it was some Muslim group that got caught?

There'd be the biggest stink. It's just a big double standard.

Q. What about sending people back to their home communities?

That's pretty rude too. Some of these people, they been kicked out of their own communities, otherwise they might get payback or whatever.

It's their own choice, why should there choice be taken away from them, where they want to live? If they want to live in Darwin, whether it be longgrass or whether it be wherever, why should the choice be dictated to them?

That's just wrong.

That's not democratic at all.

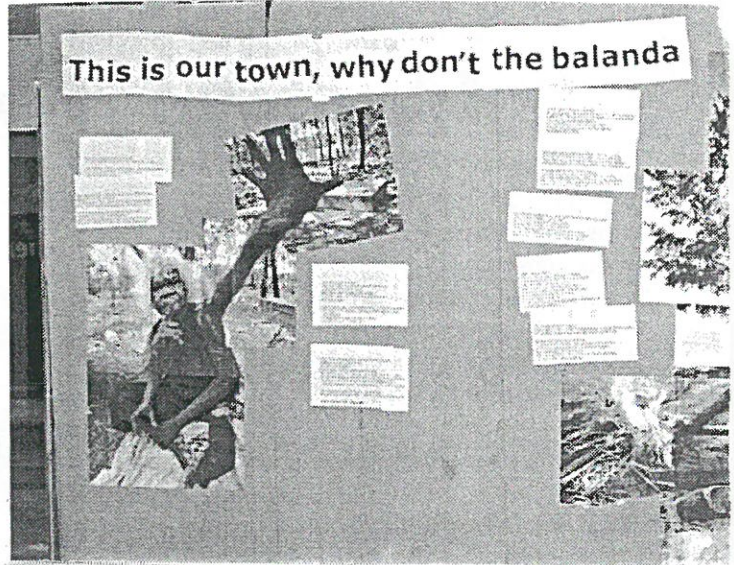
This Public Art could be seen outside the old
August 1 to 5 before it was painted over!

First I came Darwin, finish up to war.
We came overland; we walk – how many day? 6 day.
I see all the horses. I couldn't help it, I never seen it before.
My husband said "I'll lift you up in the tree."
I said "No, I'll be with you."
Only one old lady, she had humpy house at Rapid Creek,
beach way and it's the shop.
All the Larrakia mob, owner of this land sit down there.
They was staying in bush, same like here but no house.

Me and my husband was working to police aid.
Only one policeman – Sandy McNab.
He was staying in the bush where you pass Charlie Hon
(Parap Rd) where that palm tree, police station there.
We was living in the scrub.
Like I saw with my own eye, big city coming up and we still
living in the scrub.
New government people come and go.
We black people we full time living in the scrub.
We always here.
And why they kick us, every one of us - all the black
people.
City Council and coppers, pushing us from place to
place.
That not good.
We Aboriginal people, we born in scrub,
we born in grass, I love to live.
A lot of people they don't want to live in the house,
because we born in the scrub.
But this one Larrakia.

I been grow up this country but Larrakia, they full owner of
this land and why white man say – out.
No, we Aboriginal people and why white man or govern-
ment he come to see this land and make him different story
– you going back to your own land back to your own
country.
Why we are no tap, no shower, no washing?
Where we going to get water, we carry, make em tea for
us?

This is our town, why don't the balanda



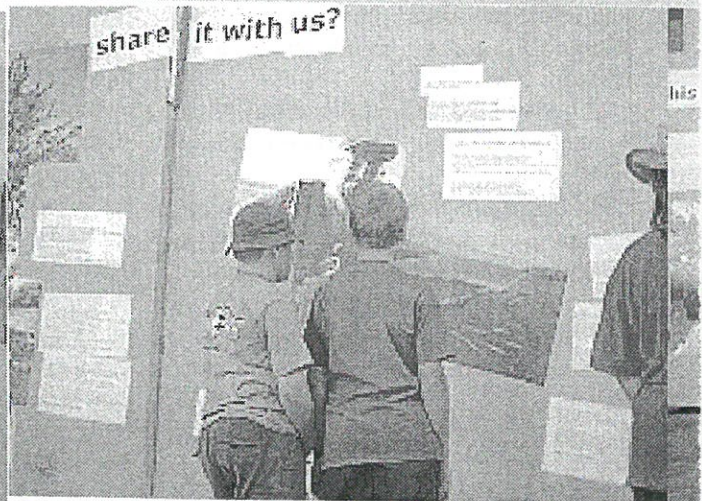
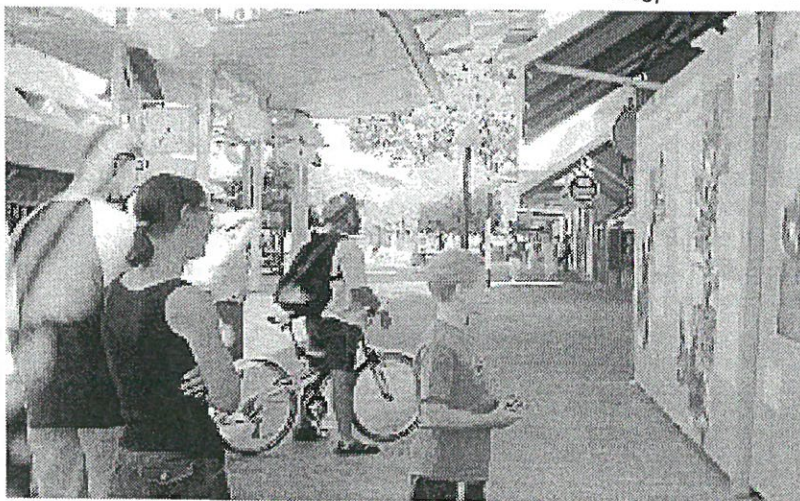
Before I been in Darwin, walking.
No war pass yet, still walking. No truck, no road, no anything.
I take it 30 – 40 people some old people some young people.
I say hey, you gunna look Darwin?
You look this sun gunna come from there and you look this
sun gunna go down Darwin.
We people from sunrise.

Maningrida side we stay here before Japanese coming.
Bomb em Oh. I work for Tom Harris. He's a cameraman.
People from army and airforce, shit you look that Japanese
coming, they clean up no worries, they break all these
houses.

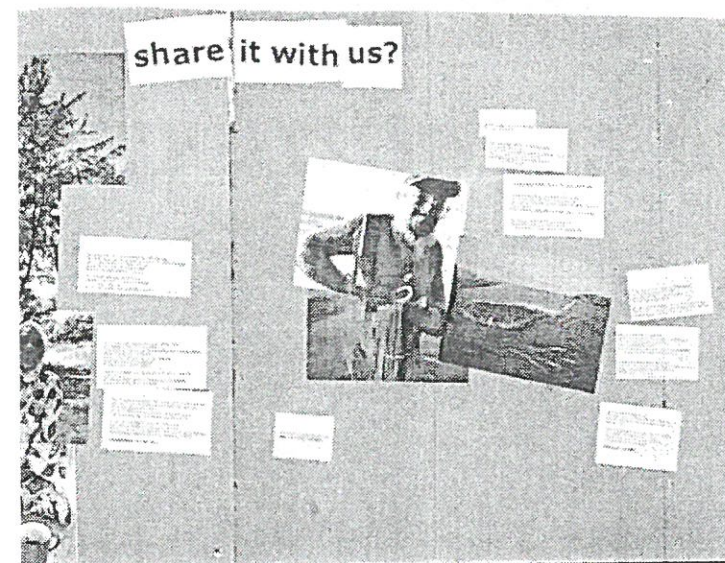
And anywhere we sleep, that's nothing.
You make your fire there, sit down talking in bushes.
Not really in the Darwin but really in the bushes properly.
Make it any city. Black people that's the way they make it.
But we still sit down all round this part.

This country for black people they born here, they belong to
here. They sit down la jungle. That's right. They sit down
longa beach right round, they born here but this is the white
man.

I don't know where he come from the government
but him come from long way and him gunna go back,
right back to him place, not in here Darwin, no, no.
They worrying for the money.



NZ Bank building in the Smith St Mall from unidentified vandals (council workers?).

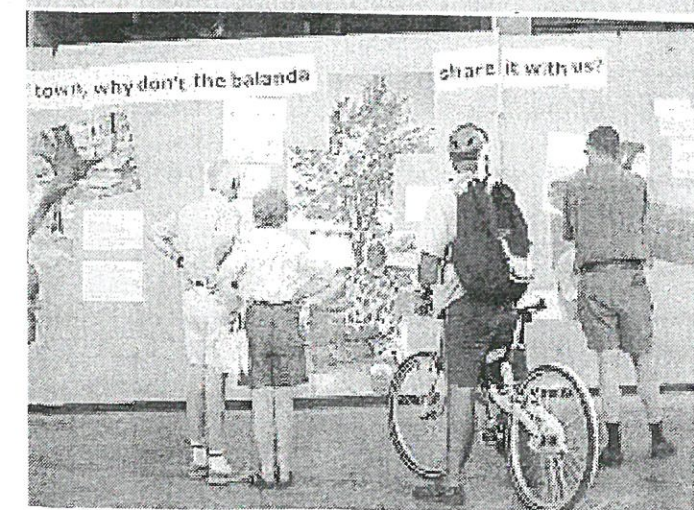


They wanna try get im from the black people and they got to be
 ss. But we black people said no, who gunna be look after us?
 because they don't know dreaming.
 anywhere that's the place, special places, it's a bit hard, quick
 we gunna block em up, put it, no nobody, black people said
 , not allowed.
 they can see it's not allowed when you go through there.
 you get trouble, right round here.

s the wrong way because this country not for them, don't
 long to them, only black people.
 e shouldn't go back and get that permission from the black
 ople. That's the word there, no balanda.
 landa he got nothing to do — go back Adelaide, where they
 ake em silly policeman.
 o this in Darwin, Darwin Larrakia.

is is our dreaming talking, this country and round this part
 re, right up. You go to the other side Port Keats, Daly River
 le, he going to the top part same way.
 t this is the white man him make it lot of mess anyway.
 at's the wrong way. They not belong to this country.

im come talk slowly, he say yes, we love you, stay here for
 o day, one day just go, not here.
 t this is the white man been come make a mess all over this
 ce. All the building, they bit high. That's not allowed, not right.

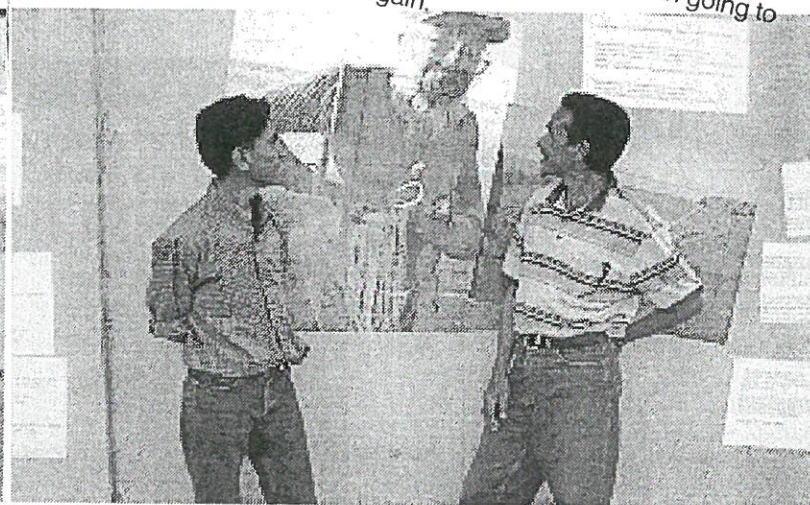


He's the invader, not us, we live here.
 This is our own country.
 Used to be trees, now it's all concrete jungle.
 Development, it's no good.
 It's alright for some people but not for Aboriginal people.
 This is our country, just leave it like it is.
 Build Palmerston instead of building in Darwin.
 This is our place by the sea.
 What we need is another Tracey — blow all the bullshit
 away.

Too much development is no good for countrymen.
 I can change with it but a lot of countrymen can't.
 They'll get left behind or run over, swept in the gutter, no
 worries. Piece of rubbish. That's what they reckon we are,
 rubbish, coz we won't change.
 I'm changing; white man not gunna beat me. I'm gunna be
 rubbing shoulders with em. So they know they've got a force
 to be reckoned with.
 I'm a human being; they're a human being, just the colour of
 our skins different.
 They hold that like it is some disease. We can't help it what
 we are.

We the indigenous people, the landowners of the land.
 They're the invaders, they should change but they won't.
 Everything got to be done white man way.
 RACISM, behind the curtains job.
 Before it used to be out in the open, but not now.
 CLP made black and white really bad. Denis Burke and his
 cronies. Burke's backyard, I call him, ancient explorer in the
 21st century, it's dumb shit, it doesn't work.
 All we want is equal rights and justice.
 That's the main thing for black people all over the world.
 We get degraded because we're not white.
 We don't want to be white. We're the original indigenous
 people of Australia.

It's just these balandas come, they think they are William the
 conquerors they are.
 Just like Hitler really, they're trying to oppress us. We don't
 like it.
 A lot of people just go with the flow but not me.
 I'm a fighter; I'll stand up for my rights. No white man going to
 push me overboard.
 I'm gunna get up and go again.



I had to carry wheelchair all the way through mangroves

Mobile Medical Bus

Jeanie Gadambua, August 2003

Well, I started working at Bagot clinic since 1981.

I was doing mobile, going out with just one doctor and nurse.

Like they need me to translate to old people, what they need, what's happening.

We just decided ourselves to go out visit Aboriginal people in the longgrass.

We used to do mobile run round Darwin area. Like 15 mile, Howard Springs, places that wasn't built yet like Palmerston, still bit bush.

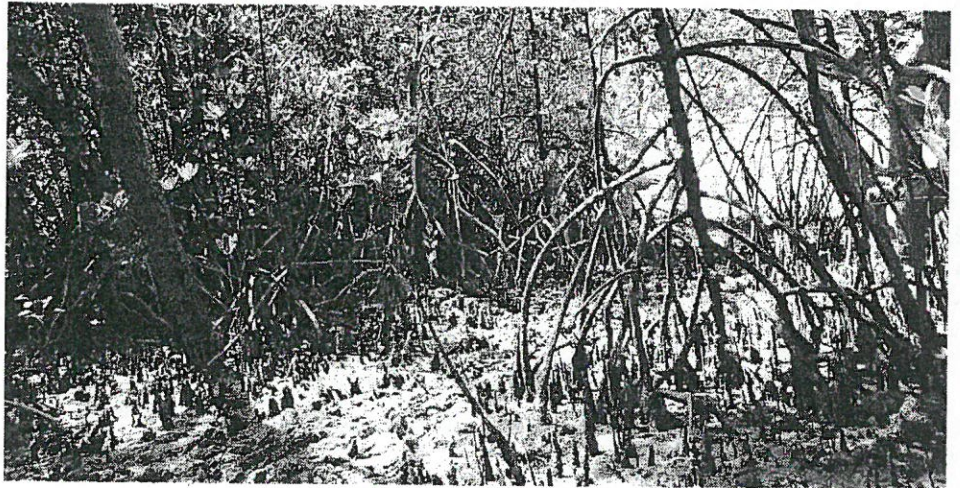
We used to go round track them for their follow up medication or treatment. We usually do daily work in the morning and follow up in the afternoon; go out treating people at beach or in the mangroves.

Sometimes we used to take doctor with us for the health problems like leprosy. We used to go out and treat people, like with no accommodation, so they sleep longgrass. We used to go around visiting with the other health workers like Barbara Raymond.

We used to work together at Bagot Clinic, used to find camps where people lived, like old Bob Bundawarbi.

We used to treat him and follow up his leprosy. We went through mangrove finding them, like old Nancy.

I tell you, I had to carry wheelchair all the way through mangroves, came



out... true! I sat there nearly cry for them in front of me.

Made me fear you know, the way I looked at them, how they're living - just like hermit crab, crowded up.

Just put one tent, hide yourself, drinking in the mangrove away from city council, away from police instead of coming by interrupting them.

We used to go round and if we couldn't find them, people used to tell us where to find them.

We used to find a lot of Maningrida people at the rubbish dump - give them dressing or medication and follow up.

We wanted to run that way, but things been change. People moved them around, camp to camp.

I was going along with the mobile bus helping with aids, going round talking with longgrass people, young people; how to care, explaining to them, showing them model, how they use, sit

down and talk to them about aids and protection. Or sometime when we go visit people in longgrass, they complain to us support.

They complain about money, like pension when they get cut off.

We used to support them, for their health problem and how they been getting by, living.

Do you think this sort of service is still important?

Yeah, it should be. They should have kept going with the mobile teams, visiting people, the way we did before.

I went through, sitting down amongst old people, dirty you know, I didn't mind.

Soon as I sat there, what's they bring up, different problems and no help.

The mobile bus they thinking about starting, I wouldn't mind doing that but I need something to start with, maybe meeting.



Dialysis Patient Bashed on Casuarina Beach

Interview with Leslie Gurrawiwi and his wife Wendy
22nd of Sept 2003

Wendy: That was late July it happened. We was camping me and my husband, some group of family down the beach at Limbs.

This one boy come around there, about 3 cars, parking with about 15 or 14 group of young boys in the motorcars. It was 2.30 to 3 o'clock in the morning. This boy he walked up and stood on the hill. Lucky we was awake, others where all sleeping and we saw him.

Leslie had torch and he torched that boy. He ran back to the group and told that we was camping there.

Next minute we saw that group of boys standing on the hill.

They had some crowbars (short ones) and sticks and bats.

They came rushing down. He can't run coz he's sick (on dialysis) so he have to walk slowly,, rest of us ran away to other side Lim's.

About 3 of them ran down and grab him and said you was the torch man, you torched me.

They surrounded him and he was in the middle, they bashed him up and put cracker on his shirt - firecracker and they blew it up. I thought they shot him down with a gun, but it was a cracker to make him frightened. But he wasn't burnt he was all right.

We ran to our friend Mathew and we told him everything that was happening and he rang the police to get help.

I gave all the information to him and he gave all the information to the police station but they wouldn't come and help us, they didn't do any action they just left us alone. They didn't do anything. They took his wallet and inside was his key card, ID, drivers licence, everything in that wallet. It was in that jacket but they took it away. They check it, everything, cos I had a bag of clothes lying there to with blankets and sheets and my things

where everywhere scattered from that bag. They gave us bad words, they gave us bad names - 'aboriginal people you don't belong to here any more, why you camping on the beach, it's not your home any more, it's not your country any more that's what they said to us.

Why can't you go back to your own community - swearing us everything, make us shame.

There where about 8 or 9 of us camping there. There was 15 to 14 young boys n girls. They where aged from 15 to bout 19 years old.

Leslie: And afterward they took off my jacket, threw it on the ground on the beach and they let me go. If you don't take off your jacket we'll kill you with the big bar.

It was the metal bar that big, and that long. (5cm diameter / half meter in length). They hit me here 3 times (back) near the kidney and hit me once right here (just below the right elbow).

If they would have hit me here (upper arm) this thing (dialysis enlarged vein) woulda blow up.

continued overleaf.

Dulcie Malimara talks about Tiwi Warriors song by Letterstick band



Queenie, Takaria and Dulcie washing cockles - East Arm

That song for one man who pass away, under his name. Camping there all over the place. You know Tiwi shop? That's for all the Tiwi Warriors mob, all the longgrass people. He was camping there, all the Maningrida people, Lee Point, Free Beach,

everywhere for a lot of years.

He was sitting down drinking with Terence (from Letterstick Band). He said you got to make the song for all the Tiwi Warriors and so Terance made that song for him. How he was struggling with his own life.

Dialysis Patient Bashed continued

I was standing there, I didn't fell over, there was 3 of them, they beat me. One was real solid, he had that bar, the other boys and girls where standing on the hill.

There was no one else here giving me a hand. I didn't hit him back, I didn't do anything to them, standing there, I gave up running.

They said go back to community or find yourself a house, don't live on the beach here that's what they said.

But it's Yolnu way to live anywhere. Yolnu live anywhere, on the beach, in the bush, in the scrub and where the snakes are, we can still sleep there.

I was very sick that time. My wife told me to take me over to the hospital but I said yukka, leave it.

I only had anti biotic then, that was from renal (unit). So I got angry after that. I got angry those people who ran away, left me behind only myself.

All those other boys they was solid or they where real men but they ran away.

Not like me I got short of breath, couldn't run that far. You can catch me easily.

So I just have to give up one way. If they kill me they can kill me one way, that's what I decided. 3 boys one was real solid, big arms, taller than me.

He was the one that had the bar and he beat me.

Other one had just small bar. Other one just grab some wet sand and put it up here (mouth) and here (eyes).

That's cruel hey. I said if they kill me they can kill me. I just gave up that time. I'm gunna die, I'm gunna die. They beat me, that was just where the hill is on the beach. Those other people, young people, they shouting you know.

Give them strength to follow me everywhere. Everywhere I went they where there. It was real dark.

Q: Do you think you'd recognise those boys again? Bi ingo - to dark.

Some young girls from our mob they where being cheeky earlier. They was

swearing and (saying) come here we are Yolnu, we can beat you anytime.

But they come here with three motor cars. They leave me here, all those people that start the trouble, they ran away.

That was about Sunday happened. On Tuesday I went there to get ID (Larrakia ID office) I was telling to the Larrakia old lady. I had the swollen arm, she feel sorry for me.

I told them that story, she told me to wait for the police to come over. She rang NAALAS about it, but I was real tired so I walked away,

I'm not allowed to get ID over there. I'll get my ID at hospital that's what they told me. Anyway it's nothing.

Nobody worries about me when it happened. I was the one who was the patient in there amongst those people. I wasn't drinking.

My wife wasn't drinking, she was with me. But this other mob they was drinking and shouting and who you are you come down here, we can give you good hiding.

Alright they went back again, took another 2 more cars was loaded with people - silly kids they came back with all the bars in their hands and everybody gone off except me.

And they threw cracker on my foot, two times cracker, those big large ones and she thought they where shooting at me. They lit it and they threw it at me and I was just standing there.

Make me scared.

Wendy: No one came round to see us. No police came round. We moved out we stayed at family house for about 3 weeks, then from there we moved Tiwi area and we where staying here for nearly a month and we lost our clothes - that was 2 or three weeks ago.

Maybe conservation or police. But I already asked the conservation and they said we don't know anything about it, maybe the police done it.

It's not for city Council this area we stay for conservation. They took everything for us. Sheets, blankets, my grandsons bag full of clothes.

We went to see the boss for

conservation. He asked all the people who did the job for them and they said no, we didn't know anything about it.

Clothes, sheets, blankets there where about 3 bags full, plastic bags. We went to the shop we stayed there for about two hours. When we went back, I was looking round for all my stuff. It wasn't there, everything gone.

Still hassle from police, they drive round here 3 times a day. That's about 12noon, 4pm afternoon and at night - 8 or 9pm - they come round and find us, say go sleep somewhere else every time.

They make us get up. If you don't move we'll take all your blankets and put in our car and you'll have nothing to cover yourselves.

That's what they say sometimes. Or they say if you don't move we'll lock you up. Nearly every night they make us move if they find us.

The conservation come here they just tell us to clean up the area every day as long as you stay here.

We sleep in one group for safety. There's about 10 to 15 family here from Elcho staying here in Tiwi.



"This is just Blind racism"

June Gunluckii Nimul Mills - song- Crazy World

At the time I was thinking about all the issues people were having to deal with on a day to day basis just to survive here in town.

There's a lot of double standards happening and just straight out 'craziness' about the whole issue.

No practical measures to actually come up with some real positive outcomes.

What are the issues?

The double standards is a maddening thing for me. You hear people whinge and carry on and on about people doing natural bodily functions in public but at the same time closing all the public toilets and blocking off access to water. But in particular, the toilets, [they are] actually closing down toilets, actually demolishing toilets.

You can't at the same time close all those normal facilities down which you would provide to the general public anyway and then penalise people if you happen to see somebody urinating behind a tree in a public place.

And the racism. Black people can't access public space now without getting incredible attention.

The minute a blackfella walks into a shopping centre, they're targeted, they are watched, they are observed, they are moved on if they so much as sit on a pavement.

It's quite blatant.

It's discriminatory, it really should not be allowed in this day and age. We're dealing with blind racism. I've actually seen people moved on from a café in town in Darwin Plaza simply because of the fact that they are black.

You can see people any day of the week, sitting down at Casuarina for hours and hours on end for whatever

It's like the fella over at Hibiscus, he was hosing people down at the taxi rank – it's just not on but they seem to get away with it.

Sleeping in a public place is just another double standard – classic! We could go on forever about every facet of our people's lives from health to housing and you will find the double

standards and prejudice and the racism within all that lifestyle.

While we're carrying on about the why's and wherefore's of all the homeless we're still over looking the basic human right, that it's a way of life - particularly for Indigenous people in this country. It's a legitimate lifestyle and underneath all this hoopla that's going on,

Indigenous people in this country are being denied their basic right, the way to live and practice their religion.

Still to this day we have not got our religion recognised.

While I dislike the word religion, that is what it is. Our Aboriginal Spirituality, our dreamings, our stories is our religion and it's still not recognised.

These are the sort of things that we need to deal with.

What is the purpose of the Longgrass CD?



George Bambuma - singing Jurri Jurri recorded at Holmes Jungle

reason, however they don't get the attention that our people get. So that's what inspired 'Crazy World'.

If you really grab people by the collar and sit them down and analyse their motives, they can't substantiate the actions.

The Longgrass CD is yet again giving voice to our people and putting forward their perspective on the lifestyle from people who are living that lifestyle and informing and educating people in a wider circle. But it's also a celebration for our people. The majority

June Mills continued

of songs are from people living the Longgrass lifestyle, it's to showcase them. Possibly it may lead to bigger and better things for them in terms of getting recognised on a national agenda.

It's just one of the many projects that Longgrass Association workers and volunteers are working towards all the time.

It's a general awareness for everybody putting forward the people's perspective and it's an answer to a lot of the propaganda that's in mass media.

The feeling on the ground has changed, I don't believe has changed for the better at all.

Certainly I don't feel that there has been any willingness to come to the table and deal with things in a manner that would be appropriate for our people. I still don't see that in any shape or form.

It's still the people in power making decisions about our people and acting on them, whether the decisions be good or bad, that's what they're doing at the moment and I don't see them coming to our people on a community level.

They may be speaking to some Indigenous people in positions of responsibility but I don't think there's a serious attempt to deal with it on a real community level - I don't feel that.

I think [representation] not just from our community but remote areas as well, need to come together and say, 'Listen, this is what is happening to our people.'

This is how these policies are affecting our people (or this is how our lack of policies is affecting our people)'. I don't know how the hell it's going to happen but it really has to happen and at the moment I find it very disjointed.

We need to have a big meeting of people and look at all the services that are available, a *really good look* at what's there and what the missing links are. And there's a lot of them. Our people need to, if necessary get out in the streets.

Because I don't think anything short of hitting the streets is going to have any great impact on, not only this government, but also governments right across Australia and local councils.



Geffory Golder, John Alberts and Cliff Williams recording

Song List - Longgrass CD

1. *Jurri-Jurri* (Flag) = George Banbuma [Garrawurra clan - Ramingining]
2. *I'm a Longgrass Man* - Solomond Nanguma - [Maung clan - Goulbourn Is.]
3. *5 Boys & 2 Ladies* - Myra Kanai - [Kaurareg clan - Torres Strait]
4. *Chooser* - John Alberts [Yindjibarndi clan - Robourne]
5. *Crazy World* - June Gunluckii Nimul Mills [Larrakia clan - Darwin]
6. *Freedom to Sleep* - Myra Kanai
7. *Gurruwla (when the tide comes in)* - James Yarnmilar - [Kunibidji clan - Maningrida]
8. *Jail Song* - John Alberts
9. *Jamuwulampi* - Harold Porkilari - [Tiwi Is.]
10. *Jesus Was A Longgrasser* - Freedom Summers [Darwin]
11. *Korda Ka* - David Luta - [Kaurareg clan - Torres Strait]
12. *Long Grass Band* - Neil Murray (Universal Music Publishing)
13. *Mindil Beach* - David Luta
14. *Sunset Bay* - Wildwater - [An-burra clan - Maningrida] (CAAMA Music)
15. *Tiwi Warriors* - Letterstick Band [Manigrida - Arnhem Land] (CAAMA Music)
16. *Mayurk* (Rain) - George Banbuma

"I'm paid to be a Longgrasser."

Eddie Shortgrass, Sonny n George
24 Sept 2003

Q. What's changed about people sitting down in the Mall lately?

Sonny: All that has gone really because the people now in all the buildings and all the construction that has been going on. That's why they didn't want to put Centrelink in that ANZ building there now.

They got new police recruits coming through there now, and they don't understand, that's like the curfew they put on us down here in the park on the Esplanade.

It's got to be 4pm, then you can drink but no more...I was sitting down there the other day and the Sesame Street crew come through – That's Bert and Ernie (Bernie and Sean) Police.

Eddie: My missus from Eastern Torres Strait. She named 'em all to Sesame Street.

Sonny: We got Oscar the grouch. Coz that's what they look like to us, as like living in the (rubbish) can. But how can we be living in the can?

Eddie: I'm paid to be a longgrasser. I'm Eddie Shortgrass.

Sonny: Police come round and they won't come near this fella – That's Marlon Brando – (Dog). And boss man there now, (shop owner in the Mall) he pays tucker for him instead of paying security.

Eddie: He pays me \$40 per week, pays him \$20 per week to be there, look after the shop. We sacked Chubb Security coz Chubb Security gave me a hard time.

I was given the dog by the manager of Deckchair Cinema – Justin.

He's (shop owner) come out the back door and Brando's bailed him.

And he goes, 'Who's dog is that?' I said, 'It's mine'.

'Get rid of the dog or get rid of you!'

I said, 'Alright.' So I went away for five months, I lived down at the wharf at the Warehouse. So, I'm walking down the mall one day and the boss comes out and says, 'You're not at the

Eddie: He goes straight to Uncle – Uncle, Mum and Dad arguing. I'm getting a headache, can I stay with you? True.

Eddie: 131 Spin Dries. 143 Berrimah's in 14 years and 1 week I been here.

Here comes Sesame Street now. Oh fuck! Here they are, look, come to annoy me. Last time they threatened to tip our grog but we moved to where they had to walk 500 metres.

But they're not going to walk 500 metres. They're lazy. So, we were right, we were there for 5 days.

You want to hear stories about what happens to the Longgrasser persecution?

So, how I got the name Eddie Shortgrass: I got a little bit sick of being locked up all the time.



George Butterfield, Eddie Shortgrass and Sonny Alawishus Goulahan

back of the shop anymore.'

I said, 'No. You said, get rid of the dog or get rid of you. I'm keeping the dog.'

The boss says, 'Move back.' I said, 'I can't afford to move back.'

He owns two shops in the Mall – and he goes, 'How much does it cost to feed the dog?'

He says, 'I'll give you \$20 per week for Brando and I'll give you \$40. Move to the back of the shop will you?'

That was when he (dog) was one year old. He's two now. Now he's a \$45 per week – but the boss pays for it. So, my dog cost me nothing. He was given to me as a gift.

Sonny: He lives in one lane off the mall and I live in the other lane. And when those to Alice and Eddie start fighting, Brando he visit the people in the Mall but no more he come straight to me.

I don't have a criminal record.

I've been locked up for being sober 14 times – stone cold sober. I says, 'This is fucking ridiculous. This is giving me the shits!'

So, you got Grant Tambling over here. The magistrate as used to know me and they used to get sick of it. 'The man's not a criminal.'

Why do you keep charging him and bringing him in?' I've been to court 28 times and I only lost one case and I used a lawyer.

Every other time, I represented myself and I win.

So what I did was – Grant Tambling's got up in the morning and he's come out on to his balcony and I'm sitting on his chair on the top floor – and it's like, 'What are you doing here?!'

continued overleaf

I'm paid to be a Longgrasser continued

I said, 'I tried to make an appointment to see you, but you seemed to be booked out, so I just thought I'd wait.'

This is upstairs on this balcony. 'I mean, how do you get up there?'

Well, I did it. I said, 'I want to have a word with you.'

I'm not being persecuted - I'm being tortured! - by the way...I'll have a strong coffee with two white sugars.'

Walked back inside and came back with another cup of coffee. I said, 'I been trying to make an appointment with you for a week and a half and you're too busy, so I decided to come and see you now.'

I've camped at Grant Tambling's, Marshall Perron was Chief Minister at the time and he owned 2 German Shepherds.

He's got Doctors Gully Fish Feeding, he's got up in the morning and I'm sitting on his deck chair and he goes, 'What are you doing here!?''

I'm sitting there patting his German Shepherds.

He goes, 'How did you get in here?' I said, 'I jumped the fence.' I said, 'You've got really nice dogs!' They're guard dogs - I'm sitting there patting them and they're supposed to have torn me to pieces.

Then I've done 3 magistrates have woken up and I'm sitting in their front year on their garden setting. 'What do you want?' I said, 'I am being persecuted, I am being tortured.' I said, 'You go and have a look me up on the computer. I don't have a criminal record. How do you explain - that was when I was arrested 102 times. How do you explain this, when I don't have a criminal record? I'm not a criminal, I'm not a bank robber, I'm not a rapist, I'm not a murderer, I'm none of these things, I'm not a criminal but I am being persecuted.'

George: You're just an itinerant - that's what they make the name for us now.

Eddie: And this is my punch line. So, the judge says to me on one of the cases, he goes, 'Oh, according to this, you're unemployed, of no fixed address.' And I said, 'No, I'm not.'

I said, 'Aren't these police officers and two security guards and with two Rottweilers, aren't they supposed to be professionals, isn't it a career?'

And he said, 'Well, I think it should be, isn't it?' Yeah.

And I said, 'Well, I'm not unemployed and I am not of no fixed address.'

My name is Eddie Shortgrass because I only sleep on manicured lawns and I'm an invalid pensioner and I live at 13 Dot Street, but if you can't find me there, I'm at Palm 13, the Esplanade.'

He goes, 'Palm 13, the Esplanade.' I'm not familiar with this address.'

I said, 'It's the 13th palm tree on the Esplanade, but if you send the sheriff or the police to come and find me, I could be at that end of the Esplanade.'

He said, 'What do you mean by that?' I said, 'Well, they never put any numbers on the trees, did they, so you just count down and it could be the 13th

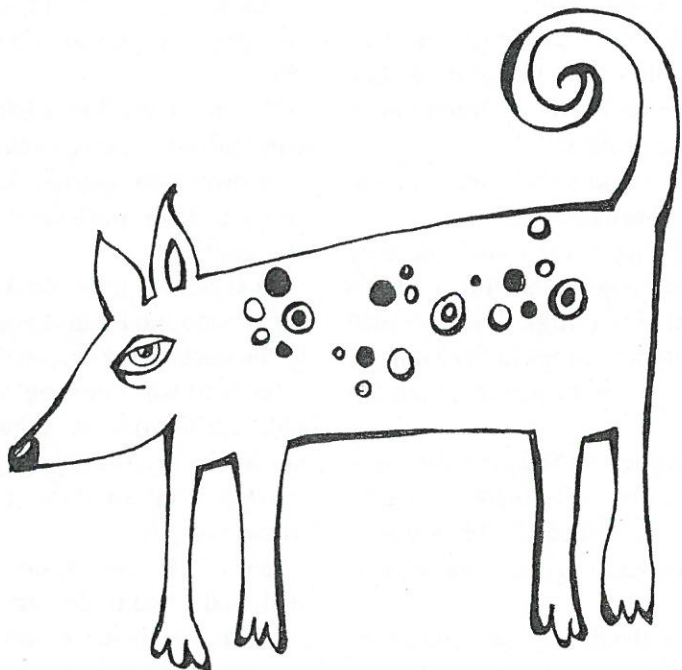
palm tree that way, or the 13th palm tree that way.'

He goes, 'Case dismissed.' He goes, 'Prosecutor and the two arresting officers, I want to see you in my chambers now. Mr Shortgrass, leave my court.' 'But aren't I going to got to jail?'

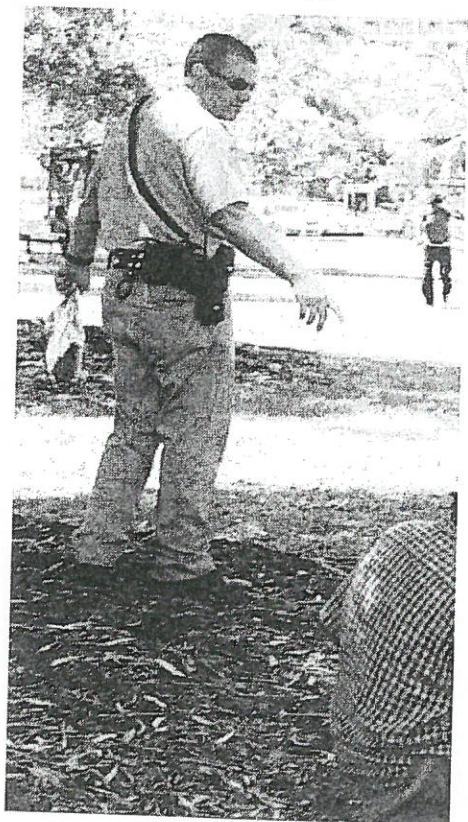
'Mr Shortgrass, leave my court now.' I said, 'but I've got outstanding warrants. Aren't I gonna got to jail?' He said, 'Hang on prosecutor.' Called the prosecutor back. He said, 'You've got no warrants'

I said, 'I have got three - aren't I going to go to jail? He said, 'Leave my court now or I'll have you removed. I was kicked out of court. And the cops got their arse kicked and the prosecutor got his arse kicked by the judge. And that cop, he picked on me twice, he got transferred twice.'

*If I didn't laugh
about it, I would go
insane.*



They keep hunting away us from the Mall



Jupurrula 10th Sept 2003

They keep hunting away us from the mall. I like to sit there. A lot of people sit here – I like to sit with my mob to –

Yeah, we from centre, we Walpri tribe.

We like to sit there to watch for the family. They come from everywhere like Lajamanu, Willara, Ali Crung, Yuendumu, all my family if they come we just watch out for them, everytime we go back home we miss out on them.

They come to do shopping.

They give us what we want.

They buy food for us; sometimes they come and sleep with us down at One Mile Dam. Some of us was talking, they gonna try send us back.

That not good enough. They should leave us alone. We can go back anytime when we feel like going back.

My big swag was taken away too. Last year I went back and I looked nothing and I asked them where's my thing?

They throw in the bin, that rubbish dump – City Council. I asked them – what happen to my swag.

They told me they threw it away to the dump. That my whole swag.

I got a fine myself. They gave me \$50 fine. All the way along I added up \$150.

That's 3 times they put me under.

That means if I would have missed that court, and I missed it – I got a warrant out now.

I got the letter c/o Post Office if I don't pay I'll go to gaol. I told those police, lot of white people sleeping longgrass; they don't fine them -town mob, homeless people again.

But when we was in Brisbane, we was living in longgrass, police don't come hunt us away.

In Brisbane I was sleeping missionary place – look after us. Yeah, but I'm staying One Mile Dam. We got a tin shed there, tin house but really tin shed.

They chasing us - We moving from camp to camp.

Sarah and Lady 3rd Sept 2003

Sarah : Conservation come around in the morning – tell us what to do – clean up the rubbish and move somewhere else. That's what the conservation mob tell us.

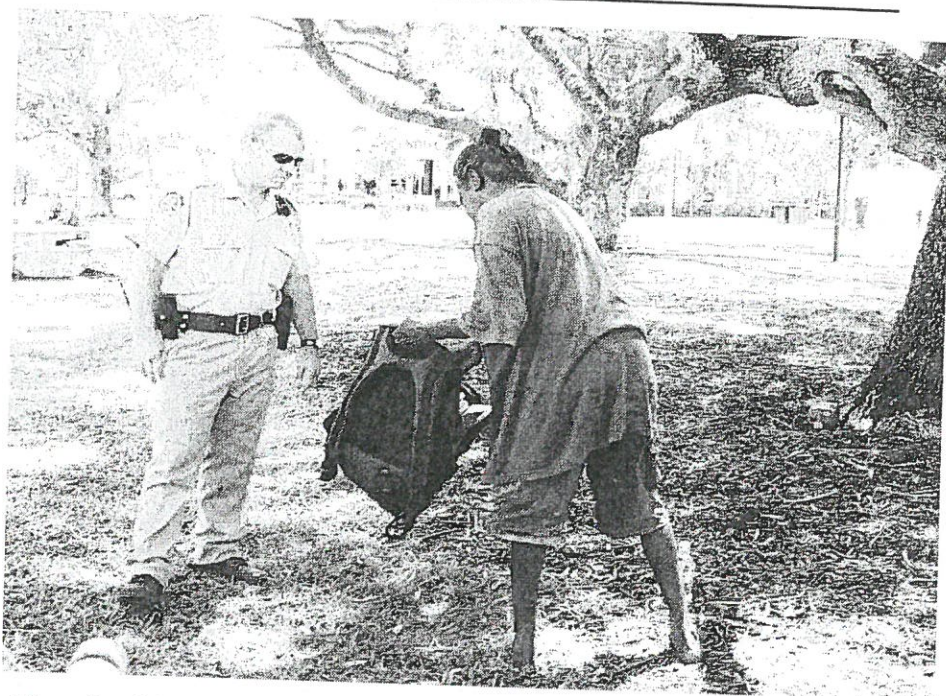
And even the police, they come around and tell us, 'Move on, move on'. We carry our bag all over the place; we can't leave our swag behind in the bush – No, we carry it all the time.

Conservation they don't give the fine but we moving from camp to camp.

I've heard the rules have changed. They say, 'You're not allowed to camp here, move, pack up your swag and move.'

Police too, getting cheeky, especially one female and a male. They work together.

That lady, brown coloured girl, she's too cheeky – threaten one of my family, we camp at night and those two police, female and male, come round there 'If you don't move we going to burn all your clothes and mattress'.



Men shouldn't search women's bag - there might be something private.

A lot of witness was standing there, watching them and they burnt their mattress and clothes, it's all burnt up. That was last month.

I can tell you this story. When someone buy the grog, those two police now come round and stab the moselle, it's not open. They just come and smash it up. We waste that money.

They say, 'You can't drink here'.

We always at the back where we sit and drink in the bush. If someone get bitten by snake, what they gunna do?

It's really hard to camp beach now. We carrying two cooking pot all the time and swag. All the families come together to cook, especially in the mornings.

continued overleaf

*They chasing us -
We moving from
camp to camp.*

Get up in the mornings round about 6 o'clock. Tea 'n breaky and turn the fire off. Come up to 7 o'clock we just walk to top and sit down in the park, hide our stuff so they won't catch us.

They are putting more pressure. We had the rain there and we ran to the shop and camped there on the verandah, we had to look for shelter.

They stole all my gear - that was when we were camping at Lee Point they got all our gears; they took it to Larrakia Nation office - opposite to Aero Club - old Arnhem airport.

We went to Northern Land Council and we told them, 'Where our gear'. So we had to run, and pick our swag at Larrakia Nation office.

So we got all our gear back. They never say anything. So we had to go in and stand for our right, me and my husband.

Policewoman she always come there at the back of Daisy Y, she's too cunning you know, fussy.

Her name is Ruth with the tall guy with the baldy head.

Lady: They come round and chuck our moselle and they say, 'Take your gears and go and sleep somewhere else.'

I don't want you people to hang around here at Rockland Drive.'

Sarah: Why is that? And that guy he told me, 'If you hang around here Sarah, I'm going to make a fine for you, you gonna pay me \$120'.

Why is that? I think that his pocket money for his grog or whatever. 'If not, you can go in gaol.'

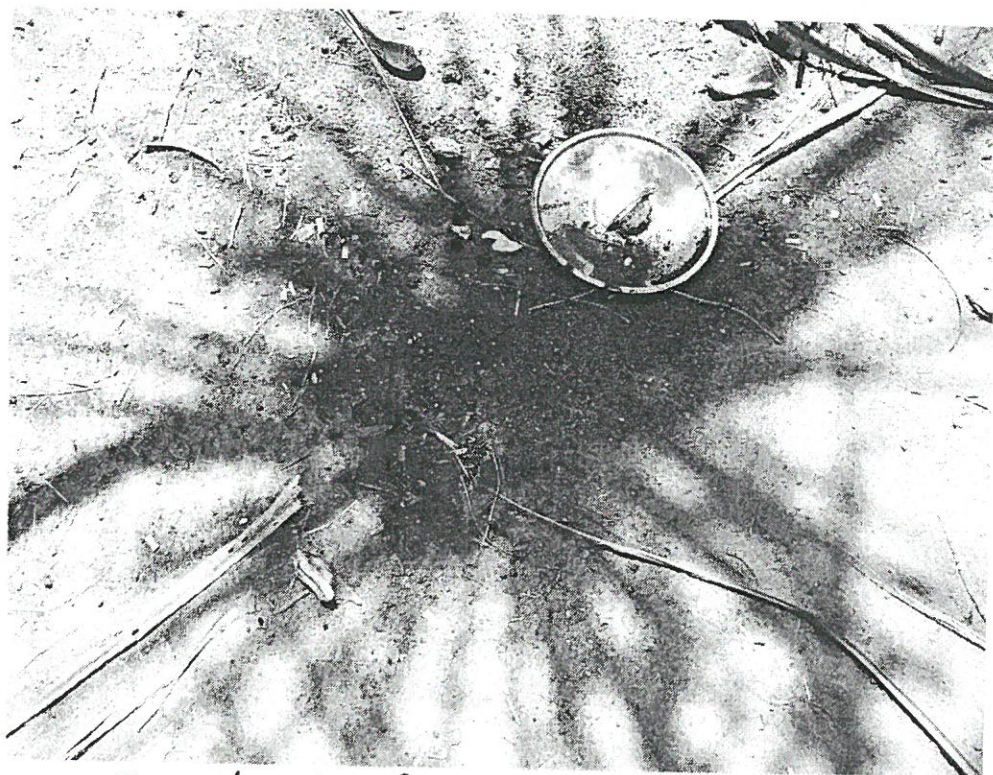
I see you round at Rockland Drive I charge you for \$120. Every person.'

Lady: That police lady - Ruth, we seen her at Church on Sunday night, she's a cheeky woman.

Me and Sarah, we seen her and she was laughing away. When she went there, we didn't tell her, coz she knows - God made us brothers and sisters and she shouldn't do that to us.

Why she doing wrong thing to us? She's really cheeky woman.

Darwin City Council - Criminalising the Homeless What happened to Human Rights?



Forced out - Pandanus Camp

The Darwin City Council (DCC) by-laws create a range of offences, which homeless people commit purely by engaging in essential human behaviour in public spaces.

By-law 103 - sleeping between dusk and dawn - is an offence which DCC fines people \$50. By-law 100 allows DCC to take people's essential belongings.

People lose their blankets, clothing, cooking pots, ID, papers, bank cards, medication, and personal belongings like family photos.

They are also additionally fined \$50 if they try and get their gear back from the Darwin City Council depot.

Longgrass Association lodged a formal complaint about these By-laws along with signatures from a hundred Longgrass people to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in early 2002.

HREOC recognised the complaint under the Racial Discrimination Act

1975 - Section 9 and undertook an investigation.

In Feb 2003 at a conciliation conference the Council rejected any change or compromise on the by-laws.

HREOC found that there was an arguable case, and terminated the complaint so that it could proceed to the Federal Court.

Unfortunately, the Longgrass Association was unable to fund the pursuit of the case in the Federal Court or provide the proper legal support required for a Federal Court action and the complaint had to be withdrawn.

Longgrass Association continues to respond to human rights abuses by Darwin City Council's By-laws that criminalise homelessness and indigenous people's ways of living.

It is barbaric policy in action against some of our most vulnerable people by government and service providers that fail to deal with issues in a consultative, constructive and humane way.

Djolpa McKenzie Wild Water Song - Sunset Bay

Johnny Balaiya

I say no! I got to stay here, because I belong to Northern Territory.

I'm a black man.

White man born but not here, when they start to get that money and big money and they happy they come say hey!

I got to make a road here, we might push you back.

Oh don't do that, you not this country here, I say to him, you come from long way.

You shouldn't go back make over there make a mess, not here.

Can't you see this is a blackfella camp - we're staying right here.. Everytime when I talk.

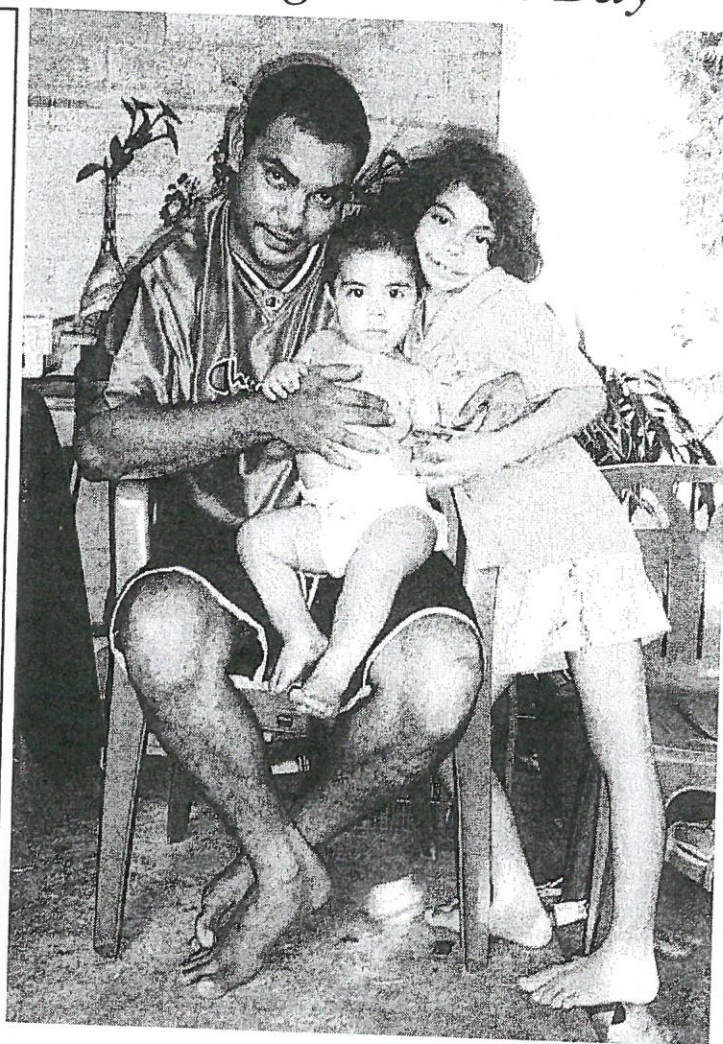
The bulldozer they push me out and I walking.

Which the man going to make me happy? But you can't break law for him, same to me.

They just money that's why they make it more hard.

But we the black fella, we right here.

We born from this black fella country.



Djolpa, Calam and Philomenia

I'm from Maningrida – northeast Arnhem Land. Our country is called Kupunga – Anburra Clan.

I got a lot of families in the longgrass and they like that song Sunset Bay – one of their favourite I think coz it takes them back home when they're in Darwin listening to it.

Sunset Bay is about my mother's country Jina-wunya. It's in between Kupunga and Bedaja, not far from Blythe River – long beach and watch the sun go down.

Q. What do you think about the message to longgrass people – you people go home to your own country?

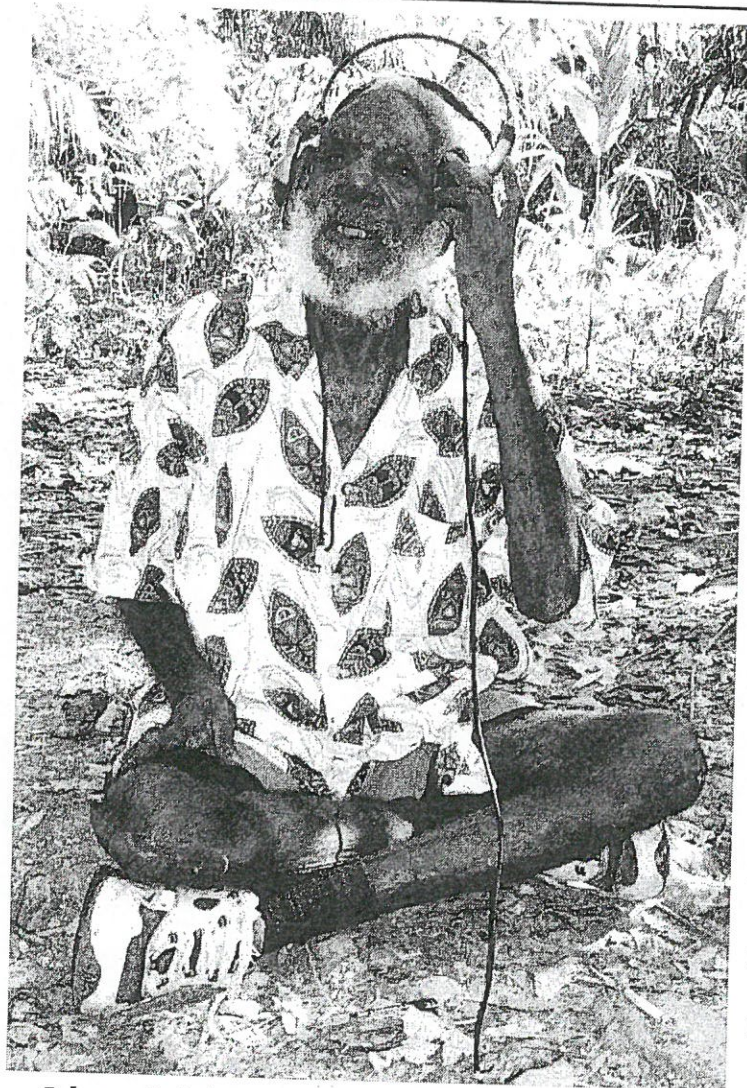
I think it's a bit racist, it's aiming at one type of people, it's not for everyone.

If you wanna say go home, say go home to everyone. I think it's unfair too coz families in Arnhem Land haven't really got houses too.

Like I'm here to try and make a life but everyone pushed them down so they got no hope anywhere.

Back in the old days, the old men used to walk over to Darwin like my grandfather – he's in Juninga.

They been coming in and out of Darwin ever since back in the 40's, 50s and 60s.



Johnny Balaiya recording session - Holmes Jungle

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