

What year? 1989?

This report has been prepared by Woodhead Australia - Architects, Connell Group - Engineers and N.T. Solutions - Social Planning and Research for the Department of Lands and Housing, Northern Territory of Australia and the Aboriginal Development Foundation.

The purpose of the report is to assess in broad terms the character, make up and possible future development of Aboriginal Town Camps located in the Northern Territory at:

1. Adelaide River
2. Knuckey Lagoons
3. Palmerston
4. Railway Dam
5. Acacia Gap

Each camp is dealt with as a separate identity with a recommendation summary attached at the end of the total report.



SOCIAL PROFILES FOR TOWN CAMPS ON ABORIGINAL  
DEVELOPMENTAL FOUNDATION SPECIAL PURPOSE LEASES

1.0 PREAMBLE

The following reports will follow the format requested by the Department of Lands and Housing, with minor modifications. These modifications involve the identification of special areas which will require investigation if effective development is to take place in these particular town camps. It has not been easy to meet the requirements of the original brief, primarily due to the lack of an adequate data base in relation to past population profiles, and services.

1.1 It seems town camps have been an area which responsible agencies have dealt with in a relatively haphazard manner. This appears to have been primarily caused by the belief that town camps are as transient as the people that use them, and as a consequence the delivery of services, in the form of permanent structures, would be both a waste of resources, and counterproductive to the Government's long-term plans.

1.2 For many years there appears to have been some confusion among the various Government agencies in relation to the difference between town camps, and what have come to be called "long grass" camps. In the main town camps were initially established well away from non-Aboriginal areas, with Aborigines wishing to live their unique lifestyle without interruption by outside agencies. Unfortunately as the urban centers have expanded there has been a tendency for them to encircle long-term town camps. One of the consequences of this has been concerted efforts to remove now highly visible town camps away from these areas.

1.3 "Long grass" camps on the other hand tend to have been established close to the town services, particularly liquor outlets, and to have been very temporary in nature. The residents of these camps were usually much more likely to come to notice of the various agencies, such as Police and Welfare, and considerable pressure was applied at various times to eradicate this type of living area and to push these people into the more permanent town camps. Invariably there were cultural constraints on this type of solution which doomed these attempts to failure.

1.4 Unfortunately there was a tendency at this time to label all Aborigines living in town camps as transient, and to view all people in these camps as alcoholics. Though these labels did apply to some town camp residents, and still do, there is a core group of people who do not deserve this label, and who, for cultural reasons, view this type of lifestyle as their preferred living model. They have no

desire to either return to their traditional country, nor to be assimilated into the wider Australian community.

1.3 The Senate Enquiry into Aboriginal Town Camps (1982), heard a great deal of evidence in support of the reasons for this lifestyle choice , and noted that town camps were likely to be part of the scene in many parts of Australia, particularly the Northern Territory, for the foreseeable future. With the permanent nature of many town camps firmly established, it has become necessary to provide Aboriginal residents of these areas with assistance in the development of culturally appropriate services.

1.4 The lack of support and long-term planning in relation to these town camps in the past, has meant that current attempts to develop adequate social plans and profiles are hampered by lack of information. Despite this the following reports are an accurate representation of current population profiles, and provide some indication of the future direction town camp residents wish to take. More detailed research will be necessary to ascertain how future aspirations will be achieved.

### RAILWAY DAM/ONE MILE

Railway Dam towncamp is situated within the Darwin central area within two kilometres of the Darwin Post Office. It is situated at Lot 5027 Dinah Beach Road, between the Darwin Harbour and the Shell depot fuel storage tanks. It is connected to town power, water, and sewerage. Rubbish collection and area maintenance is provided by Aboriginal Development Foundation. The community has 35 permanent residents consisting of 26 adults (>15 years) and 9 children (<15 years), and between 20 and 30 transients. The majority of the transients had come for the Australian Rules Football grand final, though some were from Port Keats, which is currently without its beer club, and are likely to be in the camp for some time. The community has six residential units of steel and metal cladding construction, and a communal ablutions block, all of which appear to be in reasonable repair, but appear to be now unsuitable to meet the changing needs of the camp residents, particularly the current needs of families with children.

### POPULATION PROFILES

#### Population Numbers

Table 1. Available population figures for Railway Dam camp

Year	Total Pop.	Adult Male	Adult Female	Children
1989	35	16	10	9
1985 *	17	10	7	-
1985 *	17	Fluctuates to 75		
1981/82 *	20			
1981 *	5+			
1980/81 *	15			
1979/80 *	15			

\* Obtained from reports supplied by Office of Local Govt.

The data in Table 1 indicates a change in the composition of the permanent residents at Railway Dam. There is a general increase in all categories, particularly children, and if this trend continues there is a need to develop additional, more appropriate facilities in this camp. The number of transients, and their length of stay, is dependent on a number of factors. The first of these is their reason for coming to Darwin. With the recent closure of the Port

Keats club there was an influx of men to Darwin, some of whom have moved into Railway Dam until the Port Keats liquor licence is renewed. It was also stated that people came to visit Ruby, an elderly lady who is the owner of this area. Because of the level of alcohol consumption in the camp however, very few women remain overnight, while most of the men do stay to drink. Special events, such as sporting events and rock concerts, attract a younger group of people who may stay to enjoy the city attractions before returning home. The majority of these again will be men, with the women choosing to stay at Catholic Missions hostel in Stuart Park.

#### Age Distribution

Table 2. Comparative age distribution Railway Dam camp

Age	Total 1989	1985*	Male 1989	1985*	Female 1989	1985*
0-4	4	-	3	-	1	-
4-14	5	-	2	-	3	-
15-59	25	14	16	8	9	6
60+	1	3	-	2	1	1
	35	17	21	10	14	7
* Obtained from reports supplied by Office of Local Govt.						

As Table 2 indicates there is a predominance of single males in this camp, and an increasing number of children. There are no facilities at all for children, and the current layout of the camp is not conducive to the development of such facilities. The camp centers around meeting the needs of the large group of males, which means it is primarily focused on alcohol consumption. It may well be however that this change in the composition of the permanent residents indicates this camp is becoming more stable, and will eventually cease to be seen solely as a drinkers' camp.

#### Social Organisation

There appears to be no formal organisation in the camp for decision making. When the matter was raised there was general agreement that Ruby, the old lady, should always be consulted. Though present for these discussions Ruby did not contribute. It was also decided that some ten others, part of Ruby's extended family and themselves permanent residents, should also be consulted. The opportunity may exist to create a management committee for this camp from

## Future Population Projections

A number of the older men who live in this camp leave each day to drink with friends at Stuart Park shopping centre and return at night. Increased camp facilities may result in some of these Stuart Park people opting to live at Railway Dam. The change in the age structure of this camp suggests that there may be an increase in family stability, and if this occurs there will be growth. In the next five years however, there will not be a need to plan for large population increases, unless there is some event at Port Keats or Belyuen which precipitates a large scale influx of people. The need appears to be in the area of providing appropriate accommodation to meet the changing profile of camp residents, with the increase in the number of families with children.

## HEALTH STATUS

The health of the people in this camp appears to be no different to the Aboriginal population generally. Some residents exhibited skin disorders, while others showed signs of minor traumas, such as cuts to the face and hands. One female resident is confined to a wheelchair, which, given the state of the ground at this time of the year, significantly limits her mobility. The community is visited on a regular basis by the Bagot Mobile Health Unit. For emergency treatment someone has to go "up top" into Stuart Park and ring an ambulance. Though the community has a coin operated telephone it has not worked for some time and the residents appear unable or unwilling to meet the cost of repairing the unit.

Concern has been expressed about a number of areas in relation to health. The first of these is the amount of water which collects in various depressions within the camp living area during the wet season. People say this results in more mosquitoes, and they would like them all filled in. The second concern was the collection of rubbish. People requested that either rubbish be collected twice a week, or more bins be provided. The poor drainage, and low lying nature of this camp mean that for most of the wet people are trekking through mud for much of the time. This seems to be an ideal environment for parasitic worms.

## GENERAL SERVICE FACILITIES

### Education

The children from Railway Dam towncamp attend either Stuart Park or Larrakeyah Primary schools. All children walk to school. Though there seems to be no problems with the school. During these discussions that some

## Recreation

As stated previously there are no recreation facilities for either adults or children. The adults occasionally go hunting if a truck turns up from Belyuen or Port Keats, and they say if they had their own truck they would do this more often. It has been suggested that a playground should be erected for the children, but the only available areas within the present camp area are too wet during several months of the year. Should any development take place on the vacant land on the town side of the dam then it may be possible to create a play area for children there. In the past the children were able to spend much of their spare time fishing and collecting in the mangroves, sometimes with the women but often on their own. With the increase in the presence of crocodiles the parents will no longer let them do this, unless they are accompanied by an adult.

## SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The people who took part in the discussions did not see that they had any major problems. It is possible that continued contact would allow more discussion on the effect of the level of alcohol consumption on individual and family life. There was a great deal of discussion about the role of ADF in the camp. Though ADF has been working in this camp for many years there still appears to be a lack of understanding about how the relationship between the residents and ADF should function. People are very quick to demand a range of services but either unwilling or unable to recognise their responsibility in paying for the service. Concern was expressed about the lack of a telephone, but no-one was able to encourage people to pay the outstanding bill. Interest was expressed in working in the community however, and the CDEP concept will be discussed further. The difficulty is that people have become used to using welfare services, particularly St Vincent de Paul, to meet their most immediate needs, and they feel ADF should provide a similar service. A question was put concerning ADF supplying toilet paper.

Despite this somewhat unrealistic view of the world there are a number of areas which were raised which need addressing. The first of these is the provision of solar heating in the toilets. There was a general complaint that the water was too cold, particularly during the dry, for people to shower.

There was a request for a laundry facility provided with coin operated machines.

People felt the houses should have small ceiling fans. Not big ones because people might get hurt.

There was a need for more hoses so people could hose out their living areas.

On pension day it was difficult for pensioners to get up to

town to get their money. Some assistance with transport would be a good idea.

#### FUTURE PROPOSALS

There is a need to examine further housing development in Railway Dam town camp. The current housing does not accurately reflect the present occupancy needs, and more appropriate family style accommodation needs to be considered. Development could only take place in the vacant area on the town side of the dam, due to space limitations in the present living area. Development in this area would also allow a separation of the drinkers from the women and children. There would be a need to raise the current level of the ground in this area to prevent the type of situation which currently exists with waterlogging in the currently developed living area. Parts of the current camp also need to be filled to decrease the amount of water which sits for months at a time in the wet. The Community Development Employment Programme was raised as a means of increasing resident involvement in camp maintenance. Considerable interest was expressed in the idea of involvement in CDEP. Much of the work which needs to be done in improving this camp area could be undertaken as a part of a Community Development Employment Programme.

## BUILDINGS

### RAILWAY DAM

Most residential buildings need replacement to suit current needs. Buildings similar to the Adelaide River camp new buildings would probably be the appropriate answer. At least the existing buildings should be upgraded to cyclone standards if replacement is not practical. Available land at this site is minimal. The proliferation of easements plus the Dam itself leaves little vacant area for building use. In any case, the available land is either subject to flooding or poorly drained and a considerable amount of fill or other building "build-up" would be required to adequately protect the buildings from flooding.

Landscaping is non-existent and is not considered necessary at this stage. Buildings are located to retain existing trees as far as practicable.

The following housing summary is suggested as a guide to future needs:

(a) Population

From Table 1 is 35 in 1989 with the possibility of an increase of 50% in the next 5 years.

(b) Housing Stock

Current housing comprises 6 residences

The average occupancy rate per dwelling is 6-7.

(c) Future needs

To cater for the anticipated population growth another 4 dwellings would be reasonable over the 89/90, 90/91 period. This should suffice for the foreseeable future and could be located at the end of the existing roundabout.

Land for these new units is very restricted. The preferred position would be at the city end of the site but as mentioned before, the land would have to be filled or otherwise drained.

(d) Comments

As mentioned previously, recreation facilities are non-existent and should be provided as recommended for other camps. These facilities are to include for adult as well as children's recreation and if provided may go a long way to helping solve some of the social problems described previously.

## SURVEY

A recent survey was undertaken for the construction of the access road. This survey did not include all existing buildings, nor other features that did not have direct relevance to the access road and associated drainage works.

Additional survey data in the areas of proposed development would be required.

## ACCESS

A sealed access road from Dinah Beach Road was constructed in 1987. This road included culverts over two major drainage paths, so that access to the camp is maintained in all conditions up to the 100 year return period flood. Continuous fencing both sides prevents access by non-maintenance vehicles to general areas of the site.

The road is in good condition after two Wet Seasons, and is adequate for current requirements.

Future Development

## STORMWATER DRAINAGE

Drainage from approximately half of the City of Darwin flows through the area of this camp.

A drainage report was prepared for the Department of Lands by Willing and Partners, Consulting Engineers, in 1982. This report recommended that the majority of the incoming flow be directed through the Dam, with the remaining flow being carried by an existing drain north of the Dam which discharges to a drain in Dinah Beach Road.

These recommendations formed the basis of design of the culverts and associated floodways for the access road.

In the period since construction of the road, works have been carried out at the inlet to the dam which direct all incoming flow into the northern drain, effectively cutting off the dam to all but extreme floods. It is understood that this work was undertaken by Darwin City Council.

Changing the flow direction in this way affects the operation of the drainage network downstream also examined by the Willings report.

It is recommended that the dam inlet channel be reconstructed to direct the majority of flow through the dam, as previously envisaged.

A proposal has recently been advanced to move the dam outlet from the eastern corner to the southern corner. This proposal should be strongly resisted for the following reasons:-

- (i) the largest viable site for future development would be lost (the existing outfall is contained within Lot 5196, created for that purpose and vested in the Government.)
- (ii) access to the southern part of Lot 5027 would be denied, unless costly new culverts and floodway were constructed (rendering similar recently completed works at the existing outlet redundant).

## WATER SUPPLY

The camp is served by a line of unknown size and material, fed from a 150 diameter main in Dinah Beach Road.

It is recommended that the line be upgraded, both to serve the existing facilities and for proposed future development at the southern end of the site.

### SEWAGE DISPOSAL

A new ablution block was constructed in 1988 to replace an earlier facility.

A 100 diameter uPVC drain carries the sewage to a PAWA manhole in an easement within the lot. This manhole is part of the Darwin reticulation system.

It is recommended that as part of future development at the southern end of the site, a new ablution block similar to the existing be constructed. This would be serviced by a new drain on the south western side of the dam, connecting to a PAWA sewer.

### POWER RETICULATION

Reticulated power is supplied to the site from overhead lines in Dinah Beach Road. Internal reticulation is by overhead lines.

The existing service is adequate for current requirements, and has capacity for extension to supply future development.

It is recommended that future reticulation consists of underground cables to minimise conflict with vehicles and reduce the risk of storm damage.

Present and future living units are recommended to be fitted with coin operated time vendors as a means of collecting revenue to meet electricity accounts.

### TELECOM

There is a public telephone box on the site, established for the use of camp residents.

However, the telephone has been disconnected by Telecom due to recurring vandalism of the facility.

It is recommended that application be made to Telecom to have the telephone reconnected, and to replace existing overhead cables with an underground line to remove the risk of damage in strong winds.

## RAILWAY DAM

### Power Supply Works

Provide new underground cable from PAWA line in Dinah Beach Road to replace existing overhead line. Extend new underground cable to future housing and recreation development areas, as shown on attached plan.

Provide new distribution cabinets with suitable protection for the future development, and to serve existing housing.

Provide column mounted lights at strategic locations, supplied by underground cabling.

INDICATIVE COST ESTIMATE    \$55,000

### Basis of Estimate

1.	Make new connection to existing line and metering - allow	\$2,000
2.	Supply, transport, excavate, lay and backfill 3 phase underground cable and make connections 350 m x \$75 =	\$26,250
3.	Supply, transport and install external MCB distribution cabinets with suitable protection 2 No. x \$3,000 =	\$6,000
4.	Supply, transport and erect column mounted lights 3 No. x \$1,500 =	\$4,500
5.	Supply, transport, excavate, lay and backfill underground cabling to lights 150 m x \$40 =	\$6,000
6.	Remove existing overhead line including poles - allow	\$5,000
7.	Preliminaries and contingency	<u>\$5,250</u>
8.	TOTAL	<u>\$55,000</u>

### Main Assumptions

The estimate is based on preliminary plans included in the Aboriginal Town Camp Development Report prepared in May 1989 by Woodhead Australia, Connell Group and N.I Solutions.

The following items have been excluded in the preparation of the cost estimate:-

- costs associated with land acquisition/leasing
- legal costs
- site investigation costs
- consultant and professional fees
- Statutory Authority fees and charges (except as specifically included above)
- financing costs
- escalation in labour and materials from 12 May, 1989.

## RAILWAY DAM

### Water Supply Works

Retap PAWA main in Dinah Beach Road, and lay new line to serve existing housing and future housing and recreation development areas, as shown on attached plan.

Existing line from main to camp to be abandoned, and existing buildings to be reconnect to new line.

INDICATIVE COST ESTIMATE    \$35,000

#### Basis of Estimate

1.	Tap PAWA main in Dinah Beach Road - allow	\$2,000
2.	Supply, transport, excavate, bed, lay, joint and backfill 50 diameter copper pipe 300 m x \$75 =	\$22,500
3.	Connect existing buildings to new 50 diameter line, including trenching, backfilling, repair of pavements etc. - allow	\$6,000
4.	Preliminaries and contingency =	<u>\$4,500</u>
5.	TOTAL	<u>\$35,000</u>

#### Main Assumptions

The estimate is based on preliminary plans included in the Aboriginal Town Carr Development Report prepared in May 1989 by Woodhead Australia, Connell Group and N. Solutions.

The following items have been excluded in the preparation of the cost estimate:-

- costs associated with land acquisition/leasing
- legal costs
- site investigation costs
- consultant and professional fees
- Statutory Authority fees and charges (except as specifically included above)
- financing costs
- escalation in labour and materials from 12 May, 1989.

## RAILWAY DAM

### Sewerage Works

Provide new sanitary drain from future housing development area to existing PAWA sewer as shown on attached plan.

INDICATIVE COST ESTIMATE    \$20,000

#### Basis of Estimate

1.	Supply, transport, excavate, bed, lay, joint and backfill 100 diameter UPVC drain. 110m x \$75 =	\$8,250
2.	Excavate, construct, connect, finish and backfill manholes 2 No. x \$4,000 =	\$8,000
3.	Preliminaries and contingency =	<u>\$3,750</u>
4.	TOTAL	<u>\$20,000</u>

#### Main Assumptions

The estimate is based on preliminary plans included in the Aboriginal Town Can Development Report prepared in May 1989 by Woodhead Australia, Connell Group and N. Solutions.

The following items have been excluded in the preparation of the cost estimate:-

- costs associated with land acquisition/leasing
- legal costs
- site investigation costs
- consultant and professional fees
- Statutory Authority fees and charges (except as specifically included above)
- financing costs
- escalation in labour and materials from 12 May, 1989.
- cost of repairs to damaged existing sewer where it passes through the open stormwater drain.

## RAILWAY DAM

### Telephone Works

Install new coin operated private telephone and replace existing overhead cables with new underground cables.

Cable extent is from Telecom line in Dinah Beach Road to existing telephone booth as shown on attached plan.

INDICATIVE COST ESTIMATE     \$7,000

### Basis of Estimate

1.	Excavate trench and backfill for underground cable (Telecom to supply and lay cable as part of works covered by connection fee) 80 m x \$50 =	\$4,000
2.	Remove existing overhead cables including poles - allow	\$1,000
3.	Telecom connection fee =	\$250
4.	First year's rental (to Telecom) =	\$800
5.	Contingency =	<u>\$950</u>
6.	TOTAL	<u>\$7,000</u>

### Main Assumptions

The estimate is based on preliminary plans included in the Aboriginal Town Camp Development Report prepared in May 1989 by Woodhead Australia, Connell Group and N.T. Solutions.

The following items have been excluded in the preparation of the cost estimate:-

- costs associated with land acquisition/leasing
- legal costs
- site investigation costs
- consultant and professional fees
- Statutory Authority fees and charges (except as specifically included above)
- financing costs
- escalation in labour and materials from 12 May, 1989.