

Kulaluk lease as a world class wilderness, cultural, heritage, educational environmental park

October 30, 2014

Hon Bess Price
Minister for Parks and Wildlife
Darwin

Dear Ms Price

Congratulation on your media release, "Rolling success in our parks." I entirely agree that park lands can be "utilised to their best potential" and welcome the 66% increase in visitors to the George Brown Botanic Gardens. Parks are also of physical, psychological, cultural and educational benefit to our society, as well as the obvious environmental benefits.

Meanwhile, within the Darwin urban area lies 301 hectares of vacant land containing the largest surviving area of monsoon forest in Darwin, a varied mangrove environment, a navigable tidal creek, historical, cultural and heritage sites, wetlands, refuges for migratory birds (protected under international treaties), and savannah eucalyptus and cycad woodlands.

The potential of this wilderness and cultural precinct has so far not been appreciated by politicians and town planners, who have allowed the present leaseholders to make short-sighted deals to use the lease for the dumping of builder's rubble (apparently illegally), a caveat for a marina, a failed prawn farm followed by a failed crab farm, and several proposed subdivisions for light industry sheds. If these developments go ahead, the land will be alienated forever.

Along with Larrakia people and their supporters, I have been involved in setting aside this area since 1971, culminating with the hand over to an incorporated Association in 1979. Since then, the constitution of the lease holding Association has been amended to exclude interested parties and the land is seen only for short-sighted money-making potential.

As you point out in your media release, parks don't necessarily have to be a financial drain on the government purse, and I believe, properly managed by a Trust, the Kulaluk lease could become a world class wilderness, cultural, heritage, educational and environmental park, with Aboriginal people taking school groups and tourists on nature trails from rustic educational shelters on the beach, and an interpretative centre as an entrance statement. The woodlands could be cheaply made available to community use with a network of bike trails. The creek offers many opportunities for educational excursions.

In addition, as I have observed, the secluded areas provide for Aboriginal cultural activities that are important for urban Aboriginal people's mental and spiritual well-being. You can view some of these cultural activities on my Youtube channel, <kulaluk1971>, as well as many videos about the misuse and use of the land in question. I enclose some supporting evidence.

Hoping that you will seriously consider these proposals,

Yours sincerely

Dr Bill Day
Consulting Anthropologist
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Media Release

Hon Bess Price MLA

Minister for Parks and Wildlife

Darwin

Rolling success in our parks

28 October 2014

The Giles Government understands the Territory lifestyle and the importance of being able to embrace and enjoy our great outdoors.

Minister for Parks and Wildlife Bess Price said under this Government, visitor numbers at three key parks were increasing.

For the period between April and August this year, the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens visitor numbers sky-rocketed by almost one hundred thousand people, Mrs Price said.

This is a 66 per cent increase, with visitor numbers increasing from an average of 142, 600 to 236, 700.

In the Territory we are lucky to have amazing wildlife and spectacular parks right at our doorsteps.

We want our parks to be able to be utilised to their best potential, showing off the natural beauty while also driving up visitor numbers and ensuring the best possible experience for everyone.

This Government supports businesses and those wanting to work with Government to make Territory parks even better.

It is exciting to see the most recent business at the park, The Segway Tours, is thriving, with 99 bookings since they began in September.

This exciting business offers a new, fun way for visitors to see the gardens.

Our parks need to keep up with the times and the expectations of visitors, so it's fantastic to see this injection of innovation in this beautiful park.

The increase in visitor numbers was not limited to The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, with both the Alice Springs Desert Park and the Territory Wildlife Park enjoying a spike in visitors.

We are a Government who supports fresh ideas and businesses that help drive our vision for the future of our wonderful parks.

It is exciting to see the numbers increasing and knowing more people are enjoying what the Territory has to offer.

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