

Totem Road Burials Kulaluk Larrakia Nation Ernie Chin Heritage Council NT

24 September 2014

Hi everyone,

As most of you will be aware from previous emails, the archaeologists employed by Ernie Chin & Helen Secretary (GDA) have done some test trenches on the 'burial block', they finished the survey late last week. They did not find any burials, remains or any other items of significance during the survey, on that block and whilst we can argue that the survey may not have been extensive enough, the lack of finds puts us in a difficult position.

It means that the report that they write, which will go to the heritage council, and Ernie/GDA (and us I hope) will probably say that because nothing was found on the site, there is no reason that further development works cannot commence immediately. If the heritage council and NTG accepts this finding, it could mean that Ernie/GDA could start filling in the site and building in the next few weeks.....

.....Unless we can come up with new evidence to support our objections, re it being a burial site. All indications so far are that Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) which was our preferred method of surveying the site for burial, is not able to be done on the block due to the soil types, and the amount of ironstone in the soil. So the only other way we could stop the development going ahead is to find new evidence, as I explained in previous emails.

Thanks to Aunty Denise Quall, I have been given a contact for a man who grew up in the immediate area, and after speaking with him today, he has already given us some information which may help us, so I am meeting with him here at LNAC HQ tomorrow. If anyone can think of anyone else who could give any evidence, or has any old pics of the specific block in question, with crosses or pukamani poles that could be a key bit of evidence for us.

Time is now running very short and we need to gather this information in the next 10 days, or the development will go almost certainly go ahead. If that happens, we will be forever sad that we couldn't protect it and will have to look at a bunch of sheds and buildings over the road as a constant reminder that we were unable to stop this development.

It doesn't need to be a Larrakia person to give any evidence, it could be Tiwi elders who know of historic burials on that specific block, (lots of people have told me of Pukumani poles being there, but we need eyewitnesses, or photographic evidence) or non-aboriginal people who grew up here. We need all the help we can to try and stop this as soon as possible.

The heritage council will meet again on the 13th of October, and I have asked the head of heritage dept. (Michael Wells) if we could speak to the council members directly, before they make their decision about that block and the whole heritage nomination (which includes the rest of the Kulaluk lease). We may still be able to protect other parts of the lease, re the natural and cultural heritage values, but we need to convince them of these other values or I fear the whole nomination for listing, of any - or all of the lease area, may

be dismissed.

This could be one of our last chances to protect the Kulaluk land, as I fear if we let them 'win' this battle, it will make it much harder to stop any future development applications on the lease. Please let me or someone at LNAC HQ know, if you can help. [Note: Margaret Clinch says Chin still has to get approval for putting fill on according to their revised plan, on the burial block, for reasons other than burials.]

Donna Jackson