

BLACKS FIGHT FOR LAND

"Kulaluk will be returned to the Larrakia people, we can be sure of that," Bunji, the newspaper of the Darwin-based Black organisation Gwalwa Daraniki, said last month.

Bunji was commenting on the hearing by Mr Justice Ward of the Larrakia tribe's claim to Kulaluk, on the outskirts of Darwin, an area it has been claiming for years. The Larrakia were the original inhabitants of Darwin. Various government departments did not oppose the claim at the hearing, although they did oppose inclusion of the adjacent beach in the claim.

"The beach is important to the tribes," **Bunji** comments. "These people did nothing when thousands of tons of sand were stolen. They can not stop dumpers."

Speaking on the granting of the Kulaluk claim, **Bunji** says: "It will be a special purpose lease only. To the settlers it is useless land. Maybe it does not prove how sincere the Government is about land rights, but this is just the beginning! All tribes learn from the Larrakia."

Other land claims pending in the Darwin area are the Railway Dam, a sacred rock Daribah Noongalinya, Knuckey's Lagoon and Emery Point (Goondal), the main Larrakia ceremonial ground.

Meanwhile, Blacks in Darwin still find themselves in second-class accommodation after the cyclone. One of the few buildings standing at Bagot Reserve, the main Aboriginal area in Darwin, is a house especially designed for Aboriginal living style. It is now, however, occupied by the European manager of the Housing Association, **Bunji** reports, while Blacks are accommodated in an old classroom. "The pensioners would be sleeping on the bare floor, except that

Gwalwa Daraniki found good beds and mattresses on the rubbish dump," **Bunji** continued.

"But there is no toilet or shower. No cooking place and no water. And all this is beside a big car park for all to see how our people live."

MAPOON

Meanwhile, the Mapoon people who last September reoccupied their tribal land on the western coast of Cape York Peninsula in north Queensland, are continuing their struggle for recognition of their land claim.

In 1963, Queensland police, on orders from the present State Director of Aboriginal Affairs Killoran, burnt down all buildings on the reserve and forcibly removed the people. This followed refusal of the people to move despite heavy government and church pressure. The forced removal followed granting of mining leases to Comalco and Alcan on Mapoon land. Together the multinational companies control over 1,500 square miles of their land, to be transformed into one giant quarry over the next century.

The Mapoon people want to establish their own cattle station and have enough land to protect the hunting in the area.

The seven families who have already returned to Mapoon have built monsoon-proof houses, planted flourishing gardens and are living off the bountiful fish in the bay. They've also cleared most of the overgrown airstrip and have

a radio to get flying doctor services in. Other families are planning to return shortly.

The Mapoon people are still threatened with police action by the Queensland government, although Aboriginal Affairs Minister Senator Cavanagh last October repeated former Minister Bryant's promise to legislate to remove Queensland Blacks from Bjelke-Petersen's control.

GURINDJI

At the same time, the Labor Government is still neglecting the land claims of the Gurindji people at Wattie Creek. Prime Minister Whitlam in December 1972 made an unequivocal promise to give them land rights, but the title to the promised 1,000 square miles of land has still not been forthcoming.

A "feasibility study into the economic viability" of the Gurindji cattle project was made by a commercial firm, Newton Tiver and Associates. The local advisor to the survey was none other than Ralph Hayes, manager of Vestey's Wave

was none other than Ralph Hayes, manager of Vestey's Wave Hill station, which covers the Gurindji land claim. The government has refused to allow the Gurindji to examine the survey report.

Vesteys are expected to receive \$5 million compensation for the Gurindji land, even though they have had virtual free use (at a peppercorn rent) of the land for decades.

The Federal Government however is generously offering to provide the Gurindji with cattle - at cost plus interest.

(Information in this article from **Bunji**, PO Box 4751, Darwin, NT, available for donation; and from **Black News Service**, Black Resources Centre, 330 Brunswick St., Fitzroy, Vic. 3065, for \$20 a year.)