The Editor

NT News

Last year at a meeting of the Darwin City Council I witnessed one of the finest examples of the democratic process in action. The local LGBTQI community turned up in force to defend a motion expressing support for same sex marriage. Lia Gill also presented a raft of questions about dumping into mangroves on Lakeside Drive. Another group in the gallery was seeking council support for the Kulaluk heritage nomination.

At first, the councillors had doubts about the relevance of the same sex motion to council business; however, after convincing presentations, backed by personal stories and mental health statistics, one by one city councillors rose to say that they had been persuaded to support the motion. Listeners in the gallery had a sense they were participating in a historical moment as the council voted in favour of same sex marriage. If only our federal parliament had the same courage!

Although the Kulaluk heritage motion did not get up that night, there was a lesson for the “green belters” in how to put a case for preserving the 301ha Kulaluk lease as a cultural, educational and environmental wilderness park administered by a Trust. In particular, the emphasis on mental health. Council support would do wonders for race relations and cultural understanding, while providing ongoing employment and a world class entrance statement along Dick Ward Drive, instead of the rows of light industry sheds proposed in rezoning applications. Perhaps INPEX could provide sponsorship. In the bigger picture, the Council should work towards a treaty with the city’s traditional owners.

Finally, the recent council elections suggest there is a divide between CBD and suburban priorities. Support for the Kulaluk heritage listing could help put this right.

Dr Bill Day

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