

Minmarama Aboriginal community has been constructed over the Ludmilla dump - cans of dieldrin in crates were dumped by the Army at Ludmilla in 1975

November 23rd, 2009

The Editor
NT News
Dear Sir

In the Northern Territory until at least the 1980s, dieldrin was the preferred chemical for killing termites. After Cyclone Tracy, tonnes of treated timber were buried in the Ludmilla dump along with containers of dieldrin and other pesticides. I personally witnessed local residents salvaging cans of dieldrin from crates dumped at Ludmilla in 1975. Markings on the olive green cans suggest that they were dumped by the Australian Army. Obviously, there would be many other chemicals buried at the dump site, scooped up along with the wreckage from Tracy. The issue has become topical after autopsies on six dolphins found dead in Perth's Swan River have revealed levels of dieldrin that are among the highest found in marine mammals anywhere in the world. It is now suspected that the toxins have leaked into the river from 1970s landfill sites similar to the old Ludmilla dump. As far as I know, no tests have been done at the Ludmilla dump site. In contrast, the Minmarama Aboriginal community has been constructed over the dump while no barriers exist to prevent the contaminants leaking into the creek.

(Reference: 'Old dumps blamed for killing river dolphins', *The West Australian*, November 23rd, 2009, page 10).

Yours sincerely

Dr Bill Day

Consulting Anthropologist