

4/10/12 (4)

# Heat around the bush

By CONOR BYRNE

## Anger at community meeting

RESIDENTS say they felt threatened after a community meeting — intended to oppose an industrial development on suburban Darwin bushland — got heated.

The gathering turned when the development's supporters turned up, they said.

But the Gwala Daraniki Association, which holds the peppercorn lease on the land, wants to capitalise on the land and provide money and jobs for its 160 members.

Up to 70 people were at the meeting on the side of Fitzner Drive in Ludmilla on Tuesday afternoon.

Some residents of Ludmilla, Coconut Grove and Minmarama Village are outraged about plans to develop the Aboriginal land between Bagot Rd and Dick Ward Drive for light industry.

Schoolteacher David Percival, 60, who has lived on Fitzner Drive for 20 years, said: "The first 10 minutes was broken up by Gwala Daraniki swearing and shouting at people and threatening people with sticks and things.

"A minibus turned up and

they piled out ... It was a little scary for a while. A lot of residents didn't speak out." Mr Percival said some Gwala Daraniki were opposed to the development — but "they felt a bit intimidated by the other ones".

Solicitor Michael Chin, who acts for the Gwala Daraniki Association, said about half those at the meeting supported the development.

"There was some vigorous talking — but no threats," Mr Chin said. "The closest thing to violence was some-

one shaking a fist in my face but I wasn't intimidated.

"At the end of the meeting one guy abused (Fong Lim MLA) Dave Tollner and said 'you are doomed'."

The residents say the land should stay vacant because it is part of a nature corridor and bulldozing it would increase traffic and lower their house values. They also say the development was not suitable because it was directly under the flight path, within a storm surge zone and the site of Aboriginal

graves and sacred areas. But Mr Chin said the application had followed planning procedures and would not affect the flight path.

He said the NT Government and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority had also ordered:

**A BAN** on construction above burial grounds.

**HALTING** of work if any skeletons were found.

**ENSURING** residential areas were not affected.

"They want to develop land that gives them reasonable income and allows them to preserve mangrove country on the other side of the road," Mr Chin said.

October 10, 2012. NT NEWS

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### TAKING GDA LAWYER'S THREATS ON THE CHIN

I WISH to clarify claims by the Gwalwa Daraniki Association's lawyer Michael Chin ("Heat around the bush: Anger at community meeting" NT News, October 4).

Mr Chin was quoted as saying, one guy abused ... Dave

Tollner and said, "you are doomed". While speaking on the phone to anthropologist Bill Day, I, Hemsley Rajala, shouted at Mr Tollner what Bill had just told me which was, "Hey Dave, Bill Day says you have put your job on the line by siding with these people" (being the GDA).

I guess Mr Chin was simply taking licence by claiming that Dave was "doomed".

And he was being coy when, in the very last paragraph of Conor Byrne's story, Mr Chin said the GDA want to "preserve the mangrove country".

He neglected to tell us that if he and the GDA get what they really want, which is a marina, it will be curtains for the mangroves, as well as the Aboriginal communities at Minmarama and Kulaluk.

**Hemsley Rajala, Parap**