

AN OPEN LETTER TO HELEN SECRETARY 18 January 2017:

Dear Helen

Bill Pipers Barristers and Solicitors have written to me on you behalf alleging that comments on this Facebook timeline have been defamatory to you. Pipers ask that I make amends and pay your costs. I don't know who suggested you take legal action, but in my opinion you have been very **BADLY ADVISED**.

It appears that for over 25 years you have presented yourself as President of an incorporated association that controls 301 hectares of community leased land in the heart of suburban Darwin. You should be aware by now that future directions for land is of interest to the general community, local residents, town planners, the defence forces and more particularly the Larrakia people and Aboriginal people in general.

The Kulaluk land you claim to speak for was described as a symbol to Aboriginal people (Woodward 1974). More recently David Ritchie (2015) has described the Kulaluk landscape as embodying the heroic actions of the ancestors.

You were born in 1969 so you would remember that your grandmother and her brothers were amongst the leaders of the struggle to win the land. Perhaps you also remember the heroic actions of many other Larrakia people and their supporters across Australia and internationally for Larrakia land rights. You must be aware of the symbolism to Larrakia because you were a party to the 1998 native title claim to Kulaluk, "Prince of Wales, Helen Secretary and Bill Risk on behalf of the Larrakia People".

My point is, that your role as President is a very responsible one making decisions that are of public interest, particularly since the land was granted as a Special Purpose Lease, and remains as a Crown Lease. Your lawyers should have therefore advised you that statements made **in the public interest** and based on proper materials will not be defamatory.

Mr Piper should also have informed you that a statement is not defamatory if it is substantially true, or perhaps you did not tell Mr Piper all the facts. My work always uses published references, so he can check them for himself.

There is another defence won by the martyrs – it is known as "free speech". This is a defence for statements made in relation to the government or another political topic. Unfortunately Helen, your advisers and lawyers have made your role highly political. You have even signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the previous Northern Territory Government, and numerous agreements with developers like Halikos, Chin and Jape, not to mention a 99-year "Under Lease" to McDonalds, a 99-year sub-lease to Vysrose, and a "Non-Lapsing Caveat" to Gwelo Investments.

In 2012 you told a meeting of concerned residents and Larrakia people, recorded on video, that "It's got nothing to do with you"; however, they would dispute that, and so would most Larrakia people who do not want the land alienated or its natural features destroyed.

Just a bit of fatherly advice, do you really want to open up this can of worms? And as for costs, I have spent a good part of the festive season answering your allegations of defamation, so I would be asking for very considerable costs for wasting my time, and the courts, with a frivolous fishing expedition that cannot succeed.

Bill