

Outcry over rezoning of Indigenous leasehold land

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A consultant anthropologist for the Larrakia Nation group has slammed a Northern Territory Government decision to rezone Aboriginal-owned land in Darwin to allow for industrial development.

The Gwalwa Daraniki Association (GDA) has a lease over the land, which was granted after a long battle more than three decades ago.

In 1971, anthropologist Dr William Day helped traditional owners lodge a land rights claim for a section of land between Ludmilla and Coconut Grove on the northern fringe of the centre of Darwin.

The GDA is now working with developers [Citiland aka Jape] who want to turn parts of the area into a light industrial park. Dr Day says the developers have had a win, with the Government approving their application to rezone two parcels of land - one parallel to Fitzler Drive and another on the corner of Dick Ward Drive and Totem Road [32.5 hectares].

He says some other applications for residential development on GDA-administered land had been rejected because the proposed buildings were in a tidal and storm surge zone.

"But, apparently, commercial [development] is all right," he said.

Dr Day says the proposed light industrial park is underneath the airport runway approach and there will be noise problems.

"I'm sure the residents along Fitzler Drive will be screaming when they hear this news," he said.

"The land was granted to Larrakia and associated Aboriginals in 1979 for Aboriginal community use."

He says allowing the land to be used by private developers goes against the intent of the original [conservation] lease [granted for a peppercorn rent].