

Short term financial gain of a few Kulaluk residents - hazards of heavy vehicles and dust to residents of Minmarama

NT News

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Dear Sir

After a long struggle in the 1970s, Aboriginal people in Darwin were successful in saving for future generations 301 hectares of coastal land from Ludmilla Creek to Coconut Grove known as the Kulaluk special purpose lease. From the hand over in 1978, unscrupulous developers have offered the leaseholders many dubious proposals including a canal housing estate around Ludmilla Creek, a transient camp in Fitzner Drive, a Disneyland type development between Bagot Road and Dick Ward Drive and a 5 hectare 'prawn farm'. I have described similar madcap proposals in my book, 'Bunji: a story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement.' Thank God for the airport flightpath that has prevented planning approval of many of these schemes.

For some unfathomable reason, Darwin has never appreciated the potential of this a unique and varied urban environment. The struggle to preserve the ideals of the founders has depended on a few lonely but persistent voices. The latest monstrosity to be inflicted upon even the most apathetic passerby has been the earth stockpile on the seaward side of Dick Ward Drive. Only the broadest of interpretation could describe this mountain of rubble as being for 'Aboriginal community use' as required by the original lease.

The lease is too valuable as a social, environmental and cultural asset to be exploited for the short term financial gain of a few Kulaluk residents. Not to mention the hazards of heavy vehicles and dust to residents of Minmarama. Surely such a visible act of irresponsibility will now arouse the Aboriginal community and the general public of Darwin to act before it is too late.

Yours sincerely

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My PhD thesis was titled 'Fringe dwellers in Darwin: Cultural persistence a culture of resistance?' (UWA 2001)

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