

“Kulaluk in the Darwin suburbs may well be the first claim to sea country made along the tropical coast of Australia.” Quote from “Saltwater People: the waves of memory” by Nonie Sharp, Allen and Unwin, 2002, page 41. Sharp (2002:41) writes:

“The Larrakia people of the Darwin area and the Kenbi chain of islands nearby are seaboard people. In 1936 the Acting Chief Protector, W B Kirkland described them as 'naturally salt-water people'. Perhaps more than any other of the saltwater peoples described in this book, the Larrakia were dispossessed. They were pushed to the fringes of their country as the city of Darwin grew. Populations declined, they were moved from camp to camp, some of the children became inmates of institutions. Yet they kept returning to their islands and seafront country. Today the Larrakia cling to generations-old traditions, to the narratives of the creator figures who swam or walked the paths that came to define their territories and themselves. Their 1970 claim to a section of waterfront known as Kulaluk in the Darwin suburbs may well be the first claim to sea country made along the tropical coast of Australia. Larrakia memories of seascape carry intense feeling and emotion. They are about living connections with the sea and with one another, connections which are often changing. The past is continually being transformed as it becomes their present.”

References cited on page 271.

Certainly the Kulaluk land grant was the first to extend beyond the high tide level, in recognition of the importance of mangroves to the Larrakia. Sadly, Nonie’s book was written before Kulaluk signed a caveat over the Ludmilla Creek and mangroves for a proposed canal housing and marina development to be called “Arafura Harbour”.