

Larrakia Petition in Darwin 2013

NT News

Dear Sir

How sad it is to see the Larrakia Petition lying inert on a cold slab in the Chan Contemporary Arts Space like a corpse in a morgue. The petition is a historic document, 3 metres long, signed by over 1000 Aboriginal people, addressed to Queen Elizabeth II. It was prepared for presentation to Princess Margaret during her visit to Darwin in October, 1972. During her overnight stay, more than 300 land rights protesters waited outside Government House with the rolled up document, but there was no opportunity to pass it to the Queen's sister. Instead, it was posted to Buckingham Palace and ended up in the National Archives of Australia.

Last month a full-sized facsimile copy of the historic document was returned to its birthplace for the first time; however, instead of the honour they deserve, the yellowed papers covered with signatures and thumbprints lie preserved like the bodies of Lenin, Mao and Ho Chi Min. Mercifully, that is about to change. On November 11th, representatives of the National Archives of Australia will formally hand over the petition to the Larrakia people, who will eventually display it in splendour, allowing the spirit of sacrifice and justice it symbolises to live again.

Yours sincerely

Dr Bill Day

November 6, 2013