

Issue 2, June 2003

## **TOWN CAMP SPECIAL**

Interviews from One Mile Dam,  
Knuckey s Lagoon and 15 Mile.

**ABORIGINAL  
DICTATORSHIP  
FOUNDATION**

Phone 8984 3539

"Bernie Valadian was supposed to be working for the people, look after the interests of the people and not the other way round. But ever since ADF was formed, it's always been Bernie doing this for the people and the people is doing what Bernie wanted them to do.

"He has all the say of what goes on in the community. He hires and fires who ever he wants. He's been just a one man show and no one's been able to say anything against him during the past, even if you were a member on in the committee, he'd have you voted off or kicked out.

Not that you vote so much, he's manipulative and the way he gets other people on the committee to agree with him to get rid of people, he's cunning like that. He's very good at that."

*David Timber - 1 Mile Dam (Railway Dam)*

Police threat to  
shoot  
longgrassers  
Speaking out in  
Raintree Park

Jeannie  
Gadambua  
interview

Medical bus  
needed

Interview with  
June Mills

Interview with  
Bakamumu  
Marika,  
Chairman,  
Yirrkala Dhanbul  
Community  
Assoc

Tiwi toilets

Arts Space

Busting Grog

Poetry from  
June Mills



# TOWN CAMP SPECIAL



David Timber, One Mile Dam

For full transcript of ADF/town camp interviews, visit the website: <http://longgrass.tripod.com> and go to ADF page.

## Longgrass Magazine's intentions are:

- to give voice to the voiceless people in our community.
- to educate the mainstream public about the ongoing racism and discrimination that people living in the longgrass and indigenous people generally in Darwin experience on a daily basis.

The interviews you read in Longgrass Magazine are the opinions and experiences of the people that tell them. Some people choose to change their name or not put their name at all, for their own security and safety.

Longgrass Magazine is unfunded and put together by volunteers.

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## One Mile Dam

Dave Timber Interview  
12 April 2003

**NO! We are not moving.**

I said that to Denis Bourke when he came here with Bernie Valadian on 1<sup>st</sup> April. They looked desperate, both of them, they sounded desperate to.

When you have people say 'if they give you somewhere else to move would you relocate there?' I said NO! You know they want you out.

Denis Burke said this was prime land. I agreed with him.

It's a form of racism when it comes to being asked to relocate us and for another group of people to move in. In this case it's Aboriginal people being asked to be relocated and it's called 'institutionalised racism'.

About the only thing that ADF (Aboriginal Development Foundation) does for us now is collect rubbish once a week. The workers might occasionally check for leaky taps. They fixed a dangerous power problem in the wet season after 2 months. But I had to get legal advice and put a complaint to ADF and ATSIC for anything to happen.

Before CDEP (Community Development Employment Program) started, I was the president of ADF in 1997. ATSIC wanted someone to take over community workers into one body for all of Darwin.

ADF took it over in 1998 only for town camps to start off. Other communities wanted to come on board. Beluyen, White Eagle in Finnis River, Larrakia Nation – from in town and regional areas.

Then it became Regional CDEP Corporate. Bernie didn't want that CDEP Corporate. It was incorporated under ADF until they incorporated themselves and moved out.

Before, ADF cut the grass, brought firewood, some maintenance on house, smashed iron, windows and gave CDEP permission to take money out for water.

This isn't happening any more. He stopped providing slasher for big areas of long grass last dry. I did it with the ride on last year.

We used to get two lots of power and water bill. One from Power & Water



## We re not moving!

Authority and one from ADF. I think people decided not to pay after that.

Power to ablution blocks with communal washing machine and community hall was turned off 2 years ago; reason being nobody paid power. The outside water taps where closed off a couple of years ago by ADF. We run the hose from inside the house.

ADF worker came about 3 years ago, he was curious about power set up.

He turned the water meter off. The water from the communal toilet and shower next to me got turned off.

I was paying for that communal water and power. I got legal aid onto it. Bernie Valadian admitted to that and then said 'that will be your toilet block then'. The two houses down the end they just go bush to use the toilet.

Streetlights never worked. Once they went off, they never went back on.

They put a solar power street light in 1994 but it lasted 1 or 2 months and never got fixed.

While power and lights were off at the main toilet, big mob were drinking there and one lady drowned in the dam.

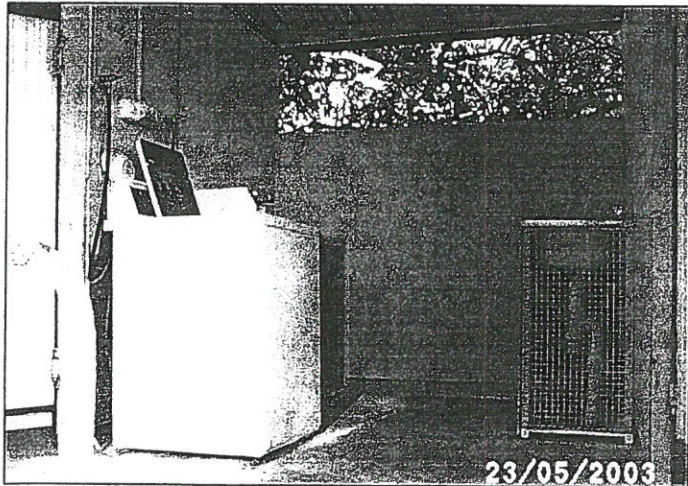
You can't see anything round the dam at night. She was in there from Wednesday night and started floating Friday. They talk about pool fencing – we need some sort of dam fencing here.

Bernie Valadian knows, he found a dead body himself there about 15 years ago.

What we'd like to see is more decent houses built.

He's going to say 'why didn't you tell me these things before'. The trouble with Bernie Valadian is you try to tell him something but he says later, later or makes some excuse.

We have to think how Bernie Valadian thinks to counteract what he's going to say when we ask for something. He just wouldn't be interested anyway. You can tell him over and over and he just wouldn't do it. You give up trying.

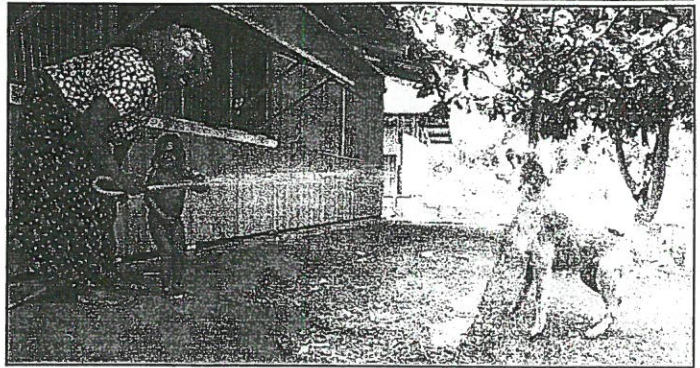


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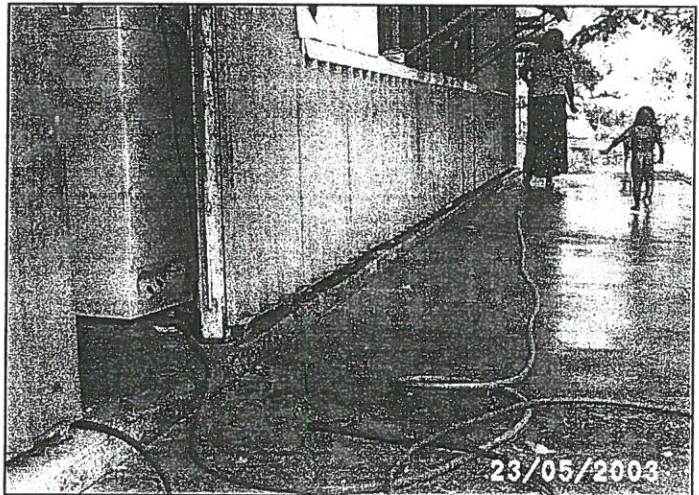
"Power to the ablution blocks was turned off two years ago."

***"There was always problems with tribes and land. And government mob have always used this tactic – stir one mob against another. That's one thing that government mob do – divide Aboriginal people."***

**David Timber**



*Mindi and her grand daughter*



23/05/2003

*"The outside water taps where closed off a couple of years ago by ADF. We run the hose from inside the house."*

## Visit from Sue Carter

**I got a visit from Sue Carter yesterday, the member for Port Darwin.**

The first thing she did, she gave me a lot of pamphlets about lot of stuff been going on around Darwin lately. Mainly the 'itinerant problem.'

Then she started talking about how it's been, had I been talking to government lately about what's gonna happen here? I said no, never heard anything from anyone, even the government.

Then she said 'do you have any problems'. I said yeah, 'we got some problems, some of the powers been switched off, these toilets here, that

communal laundry and washing machine, the powers been switched off there for over a year now.

I said that to her and she asked who's in charge. I said Bernie Valadian. The ADF chap. And I said he's been in the paper recently, he's funding's been cut by ATSIC.

She was just pretending she didn't know, we went around and I showed her. She asked me 'if I was to go leave here would I go back to Daly River?'

Now that's something really hit me cause first, she doesn't know I'm from Daly River cause I never told her that. I don't know

where she got that information from? I said I'd probably see what happens here first, not saying anything.

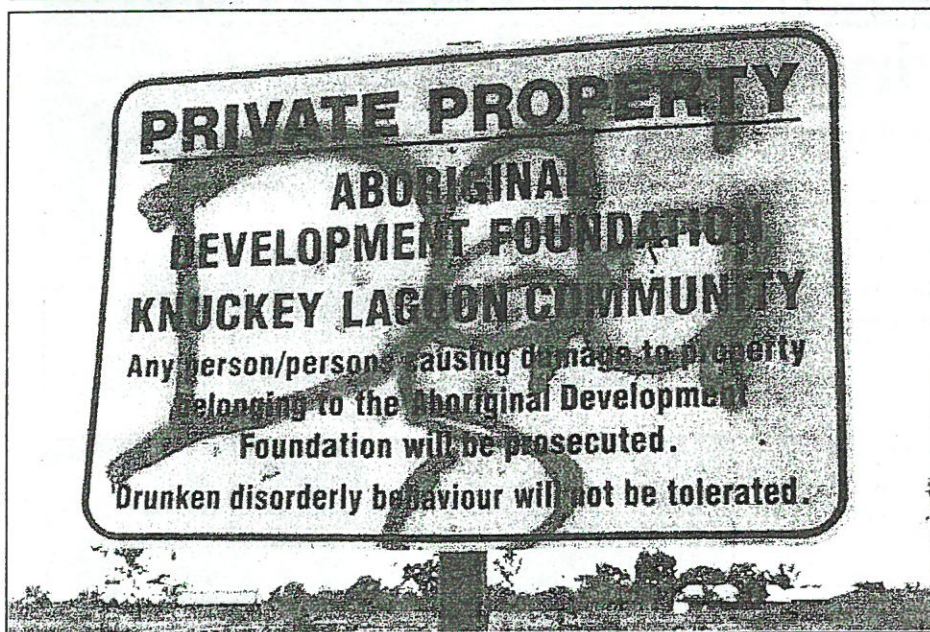
How would she feel if I ask her to go back to the state she comes from? I didn't expect that and I felt a bit like ah shocked when she said that.

We talked about that we do the CDEP workers ourselves. We maintain the grounds and all that keep it tidy. And that was it actually.

She left and said something about 'we'll talk to Bernie and see what we can do about the power problems we've got here'.

*David Timber 12 May 2003, 1 Mile Dam*





## Knuckey s Lagoon

Interviews

19<sup>th</sup> May 2003

(The names of some people in this interview have not been written for security reasons)

### Knuckey's History

TS: Lot of old people been here, live around like all the longgrassers doing. Well that's the same, they been live here, found it from Batchelor. They been travel and found it here and they live here, so they been recognized properly. So they been take em all the tin irons that they used to make a shed here.

Old Major, Old Nugget, Old Willy Gaden, all that mob. Louise and all that Major family, Willy family – they used to be out in the college, Berrimah.

So Bill Day found that mob and started to help that mob, and he did it. He built that house. Louise's father was president then – Major Rankin.

And he was living on, before cyclone time, wandering around, up and down, nothing doing, back here.

We had just started to live here, came in from out station at Finnis River with my wife. We been live here and they started to recognize this place and they like to live here.

Might be couple of days used to come around, talk to the old people, specially Old Major. Bill Day – yeah, he's a nice bloke. Then oh, lots of people been coming in, Mudananga tribe live here.

So, after a while still got a tin house we been live in before. Tin shed we made from collect at rubbish – not really house. And

after a while we had a meeting with Bill Day and Jack Phillips. We'll put a building, built that house.

We used to drink but no fighting, sometimes argue.

When the cyclone been coming in we didn't know, we just got shock that day. We just hang around collecting all the pie and cake and booze.

We just sat down and talk, talk. Drunk people been lying down everywhere. And that Old fella went out with a bottle of wine, big bottle. He drink it himself before cyclone been coming in, before 6am I think. He wiped it out, we lost one old man.

We couldn't sleep, we just stand up, standing sleep – too cold. Everything this way been wet, cant do anything. No one drinking, except Alec Garrawee – he drunk all night. He didn't care about wind, cold.

And after the cyclone, we all been spread. Some people been went away and I went back to Port Keats with my wife early morning.

We found that old fella dead. Big mob log from foot to head. We been looking for him til we find him. Found him with bottle of wine, but he never cracked that bottle.

And we run up there – one vehicle been running and help us to set that body right, take it. That's Old Major's father. Very, very strange hey. In cyclone time, wind. A lot of mess up here tree been die that morning we got up.

Very long not much trouble we been getting it from white fella. Used to go with Roy Kelly, Old man Buk Buk, Old Jaga boy and Old Fred Waters, Willy, Nugget Captain – they used to go with that welfare

bloke to have meeting for this place, untill they been win. All the Old people been gone – only that old place there, number 1,2,3,4,5 house really.

When the ADF started here, I wasn't here then. I went back home to Port Keats. I came back I seen all them house there. I been stop at Port Keats 4 or 5 years.

Since I come back, because my wife's father been pass away. That's why I came back.

Roy Kelly, all that old people been still alive. Normally every morning, sometime every week they come, need to have meeting here for housing, how people want to live here. But me never been work for CDEP, nothing.

DT(David Timber): There was only 2 town camps here at the time – One Mile and Knuckeys.

TS: Yeah, that's it.

Q: Could anyone go to the meeting and talk?

TS: Used to be that what they did, now different. Very hard and we getting down poor too. Not much help. They did help for these houses last year, that's it. We don't see much.

We sitting down, no help, no nothing.

Q: Do you feel that you could talk to ADF about what's going on?

TS: Some time Bernie Valadian come round here. We ask them, he talk to them sometimes.

But we need something to do you know. We not gonna sit down, leave rubbish around laying everywhere. Maybe sometime we got a problem with water blocked up like that, or house damage like that. Sometimes workers come up and we tell that mob to fix it up house. ADF doing nothing much.

### Town Camps pay to use ADF Slasher

GM: We need this grass down cause a few of us nearly got bit by a snake. That little boy nearly got bit at the back of his house there.

Q: So why can't you get that equipment from ADF?

GM: Because it's not available. Bernie won't supply it. He wont give it out, he cant give it out.

I don't know what's wrong. Like if Knuckeys Lagoon Community want to use equipment from ADF, CDEP has to give funding to ADF to use. I think he goes by the hour.

DT: I think he's making his own rules that Bernie.

GM: CDEP offered, if they gave us the



## "He won't give job to aboriginal people"

slashers, we'd provide the fuel, but Bernie didn't want it that way – he wants a hiring fee as well. CDEP got no power over him what so ever. I think they're too frightened to talk to him too.

**Q:** What's ADF's excuse for not cutting the big grass?

**DT:** Bernie was in the paper saying that his funding been cut, he can't cut the grass. What a load of bullshit.

**GM:** Every other time when he gets the funding we been complain about the grass being long, but after that he just didn't give a damn. He just telling everybody 'haven't got the money to run this thing to cut all this grass'.

Well all the mowers we use for cutting this big grass are all bugged up. Just push mowers. We had one ride on but only small one that CDEP gave us for a loan for the big grass in the middle.

**DT:** He's been selling a lot of things lately from ADF. Getting rid of stuff. Big steel lathe from the workshop – I saw it on the back of the truck. He probably sold it.

Who knows what else he sold? And he's saying he's got no money for fuel? And here we got the grass growing right round the bloody houses.

People not that silly. People keep saying to him, 'just provide the tractor'. He still wont provide the slasher. He's making all these excuses.

**GM:** If CDEP try and get stuff from him for this Community, they have to pay out of our Community's funding. Half goes to ADF, half goes to CDEP. He's saying that what goes to ADF is not enough.

### Pay Deductions – Where does it go?

**Q:** What do you know you pay?

**GM:** We pay \$15 for essential services, \$10 for firewood and \$10 toward community electricity and rent is \$75. It was \$35 last year and then he said it's going up to \$50.

After that \$50 he came back again. He'd changed his mind and said \$75 rent a fortnight.

It's per person in each house, so however many people in that house have to pay \$75 each.

They automatically deduct it from CDEP pay. I got all my slips here. Sometimes he doesn't give those figures to CDEP, because some of those figures we look for on CDEP pay slip, it doesn't add

up to the money we know is missing.

I said to F at CDEP we not going to pay rent! Coz we're not sure if IHANT collecting the money or ADF. We don't know who supposed to be collecting the money.

Now if Bernie is collecting the money, we don't know where it's gone, might be in is pocket? F said "no you mob got to pay rent or you mob get kicked out." She kept on saying like that.

I think really hard for that one. I just told her we should just dead stop every deduction out of our CDEP money and then we get everything right – we know who its paying to, who's in charge of every bits and pieces that we paying money for. Then we'd be certain, and that we'd get the service that we are paying for.

**Q:** What is essential service?

**GM:** That's just for the water and maintenance which they come and fix up, leaking tap or power switch broken. That sort of thing, something wrong with stove, rubbish.

**Q:** How long does it take to come and fix it up?

**GM:** Oh well, whenever they feel like it. When those (ADF) workers come here to do something we just walk over and tell them.

They (rubbish collection) don't come on time now like they used to, regular. Might be Wednesday and Friday. They don't do that anymore. They'll just come anytime, anyday. He won't let you know what time.

Might be a couple of weeks then you'll just see them picking up rubbish. He was complaining before that – we shouldn't burn the rubbish in the drums, but these dogs tip it over. Can't be picking up all the rubbish all the time. We battling as it is.

**DT:** We used to burn the rubbish all the time and he never said anything – just now.

These things need to be investigated by

the relevant people. About power and water mainly.

How much is being paid and taken out from CDEP for pay toward ADF's house as rent?

There needs to be an investigation there – somebody has to look into it.

**Q:** Are you getting firewood?

**TS:** Used to be before but not now. No, finish.

**Q:** What about young people and training?

**TS:** Nothing.

**Q:** So people never been able to approach ADF, learn how to drive or get a job with ADF to help look after their Community?

**TS:** Nothing. None at all.

**DT:** I came here after 1975 after I met my wife, to live here for a while. Us mob hey, I never saw any training towards any young people round here, even work for ADF. Maybe one or two people from town camps but not much really. Only outsiders used to get work.

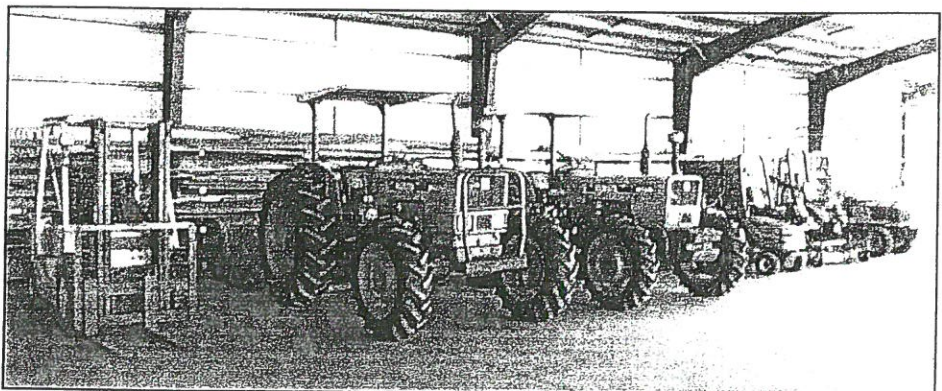
**GM:** We tried suggesting it. Some fella there, educated you know. They'll pick up quick, learn quick. But they reckon he won't give job to Aboriginal people.

We tried to ask him to train someone to be in the office, maybe just watch that office lady work and pick up and maybe do training some time at Batchelor. But he said they couldn't do that.

We asked him in 2001. Even CDEP liason job, go out with Dave or Dean as trainee. Maybe then the Community can take over when those boys got the training and experience you know? But they said they haven't got enough money for it.

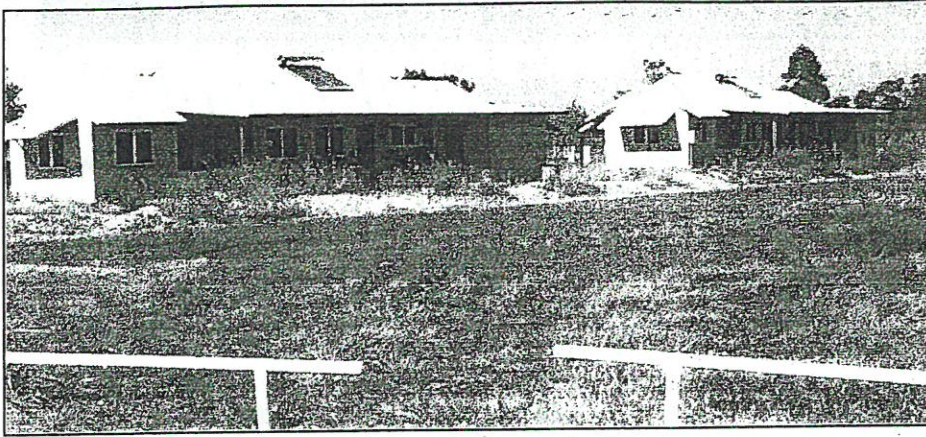
Some offered volunteer work, still he won't take it. They just tell us not to go round ask Bernie cause he'll say no, just drop it there.

*Continued next page.*



ADF mowers, tractors, slashers. 'If we want to use ADF equipment, we have to pay.'





*"We're the ones that live in that house."*

*We should have a bit of say in how we want to live."*

## Upgrade of houses

**GM:** You were here that time we had that meeting here old man? With that ATSIC mob? When they tell us for them houses they going to renew them and put new houses?

**TS:** Yeah.

**GM:** But then that was only one talk we had with ATSIC mob.

**TS:** That's it.

**GM:** All that mob when they signing they didn't come out to us like how we want that house. Everybody wanted it to be brick because of that cyclone last time.

They didn't get told it was going to be the same - iron house. They didn't talk with anybody - designing of the rooms, the colour of the tiles, nothing.

**Q:** When was the first time you saw the design for the renovated house at Knuckeys?

**GM:** When they started to rip it down. One bloke come round, he said 'I'm just checking where we going to put the new sewage'. I said something about this house and he said 'Don't say you haven't seen the design?' He took out a blueprint and showed us.

**Q:** What did you think about the design?

**GM:** We felt really left out. I mean we're the ones that live in that house. We're the ones who should have a little bit of a say in how we want to live.

You know we got kids, we got grandchildren and plus we got a lot of old people here. That house over there is not even big enough. It's really narrow them rooms. Wheelchair camp really narrow.

**Q:** Have they got the wheelchair access?

**GM:** No. That's what I mean. We should have got together and talked about each house.

What I was thinking about wheelchair, is that he's got to make a ramp for her to go up and a little thing on the toilet to hold when she goes to have a shower. No rails, no nothing. People have to lift her up off

the floor or sometimes she has to crawl in the shower. That was it.

He just told us there's going to be 3 new house, 4 going to be renovated. You mob got until next week to move out and all the blokes just come in and straight away worked.

**DT:** The house we're living in down the camp, One Mile Dam. Near the doorway there, there was supposed to be a toilet built, and shower - like these houses. But Bernie told them mob who was building it 'don't worry about it, just cover it.'

There is supposed to be a self contained toilet within the house. But Bernie said leave it cause their was an ablution block right outside my house.

Bernie saved a lot of money from cutting corners. That's what happened to these Knuckeys Lagoon houses - they weren't built to design. Even the sceptics. That's just some of the things Bernie's doing, cutting corners to save money.

That needs to be looked at.

**GM:** Then again, what about if Bernie Valadian reads this? He might come around and say 'Oh alright, I know you mob been having meeting.' What's going to happen?

Like, I'm just asking, what's going to happen? We going to get supported on that? I know he won't have the right to kick us out because we got all that tenancy agreement we signed through ADF or IHANT?. But lot of people scared of him, think he will kick them out if they talk story.

ADF worker told us he don't like meetings without him knowing. Say like this meeting now.

He finds we had the meeting here, he get really angry. He don't like private meetings. We had one meeting with that bloke for training for forklift. He got really angry with us and again the ADF worker told us next time we want to have a meeting we have to call him up and let him know first.

**Q:** Some people living in the old houses here?

**GM:** Yeah. They getting painted up, from us mob. We doing this thing, going with paint mob from CDEP. They bring paint out and usually the boys, they clean up, paint em up. ADF didn't do that for us or CDEP. We did it ourselves.

**GM:** We wanted power cards, not this main electricity. I don't know how many times we where explaining to Bernie time and time again.

These old people they don't know how to save money. When their payday come they book down. When you got power card, they know you have to buy it, it's easy. They go and buy \$10 or \$20 and put it in.

But this other power goes on and on and on and next minute they realise power cut off and they got no money because sometimes they bookup too much. "Bernie", I said, "why don't you start this side and can you just start with the old people and that block?"

The people that came to check the block said 'Yeah, they can do it'. But Bernie told us that they couldn't do it. He said that every house had to be renovated first.

**DT:** No one in these Communities have any say. If this is what the people want, he seem to override what the people say. They just don't have any powers.

**Q:** How do you want to see your communities run?

**GM:** Community Council from each town camp meet up every 2-3 months - let leaders talk to community first, you know, ideas and suggestions from community members and take it to the big meeting then talk about it here, and like maybe they say yes, think that's a good idea, no. Community members from each town camp.

**DT:** We'd like any suggestions from ATSIC too.

This ADF been looking after 4 town camps, 1 Mile Dam, Knuckeys, 15 Mile and Adelaide River. It should stay in the hands of the people who are running the whole thing or even find somebody to run it.

Because ADF got the equipment there, still doing the same thing like it's always been except nother mob people running it, different people, committee members from each camp cept under another name maybe.

## Signing for tucka

**GM:** You know when he brings them tucka, we sign the paper. Might be he take em out of wages hey? That's the one now we might miss him. Whatever he give you, one bread, might be one tea leaf, chicken and you gonna sign for it. Even one little packet of sausage, one bread - we sign.

**Q:** What about the food voucher?

**GM:** That's different. Even if he gives



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you that food voucher, you got to sign. We want to know what he's doing, Maybe that's where our money's going, maybe our money's gone missing there.

Each camp is different sheets of paper they sign, they all got to sign and blankets, you sign. We would like to know about everything that goes on. He reckon he just keep it for reference or something. We try to ask CDEP mob but they don't know what's going on. Maybe for his record hey so they can get more funding.

**DT:** He's selling things out of ADF.

**GM:** Well, he going to leave everyone broke. We need it, investigation to be done quick, he's been doing it over the years slowly slowly. He got it where he want it now. If he walks out he'll just walk out just like that.

I been told from the old DAA days (Department Aboriginal Affairs) all the old stuff he used to have there, I think he's getting rid of.

ATSIC or whoever it is, maybe the fraud squad should check it out. That's Aboriginal money for the camps. Noone likes him anymore. A lot of people over the years since ADF started been trying to get rid of him, from what I been told over the years.

But Bernie was somehow recognized by the government of the day, for when he used to work for the lands branch, he got the nod and this other aboriginal fella got knocked out.

**GM:** He's slowing things down. We'd like to see this place up and running more better than what it was before; we want to have fun like stuff for the kids here, recreation and all that stuff.

Even BJ, the fella that was here, he tried and tried to get a playground for the kids asking ADF to fund it, but they told him he had to do it himself.

You see these kids nowadays here. They just go straight for ganja now, drink, coz they got nothing to do, might be weekend programs or holiday programs, you know, get somebody come here, take them out for holiday, give parents a break.

**DT:** I reckon CDEP got too much on its plate already coz they look after communities everywhere, all these other Aboriginal organizations. That's where the ADF should come in, still work the same way with this 3 or 4 town camp. Because right now we're not getting much done with this CDEP.

A lot of other organizations came on board when CDEP was just meant for town camps. Since they've taken the other organizations on board, they've been just about forgetting all these town camps communities. Lot of favoritism going on

*"We'd like to see this place up and running more better than what it was before; we want to have fun like stuff for the kids here, recreation and all that stuff."*

with CDEP workers.

**GM:** Because you look, one fan belt arrived yesterday afternoon. We ordered that 4 weeks ago through CDEP. Their office, if ever there – they just have to go to Bunnings or whatever, this hardware store to get it.

Should be straight forward to get it. Parts, even fuel, we have to wait a couple of weeks then go and remind them again. We go in our own private vehicle they give us.

**DT:** Lot of these CDEP project workers, they'd rather go miles and miles away. They don't like working in the close area.

**GM:** That's what we're suggesting, Aboriginal trainees for CDEP working with them as trainees and expand the job a little bit, like for liaison officer and some things like that.

We want to see Aboriginal people there, doing not just half caste people but train blackfella, like at Communities. If you don't know how to read and write, send them for training at Batchelor. They'll learn, pick up. They might reckon Aboriginal people are dumb.

That's why I'm thinking about this lease see, this part of it. And maybe get a copy and try look how long.

They reckon he signed a lease here, because even CDEP mob tried to do some things here. But he sort of told them off

about that leasing thing and even when they went to the police, I don't know who they approached.

They said 'Oh Bernie Valadian has got every right to say something for this place cause he's the lease, he's hold it.' We don't know how long it is.

## Kicked off the committee

**GM:** Cause it looks like nobody's got any right to talk back to him. Me, I don't care, I talk back. I tell him off, but I'm not happy with that, I tell you, sometimes he don't like me. He don't like me to be on the committee anyway.

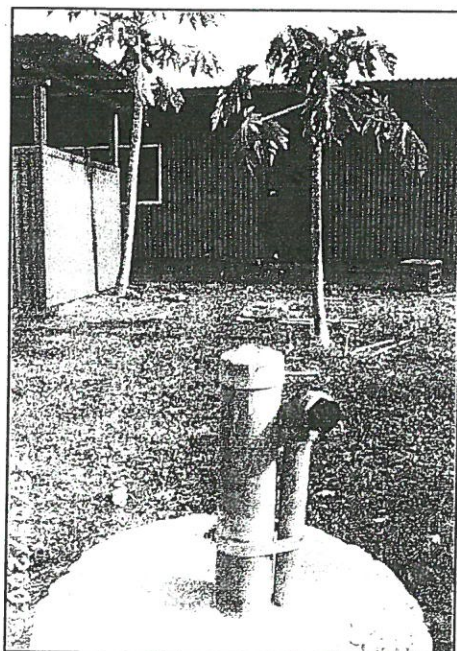
Last time I was asking for how we wanted to see all financial papers for funding or whatever it's being used on. Come back and tell the community here – he's using money for this and that. left 1-how much is spent. 2-that's how much is left. He don't like it. That's why he put M on the committee and I got put off.

We starting to feel it now, we can feel what's happening to this community. Like all this rubbish business stop, all the help from ADF stop.

When you talk to him he just say one word – short on funding. That's all, can't do anything about it. 'If you mob want to complain, go. Complain to ATSIC to get some money.' That's what his workers say to us too. They tell us sometimes, 'you mob, complain to ATSIC about him as well – his workers.' They don't like him you know. But they just doing their job, just to make money. They get proper wages you know.

**DT:** I think if you're a bloke who's smart, you can read and you're intelligent, Bernie doesn't like you on the committee or anywhere at ADF, he just won't want anything to do wiith you, and hell, if you start making noises about how things are being run under him and you're on the committee, he'll get together with the other mob on the committee and he'll sort of manipulate them, get them into voting to get you off the committee.

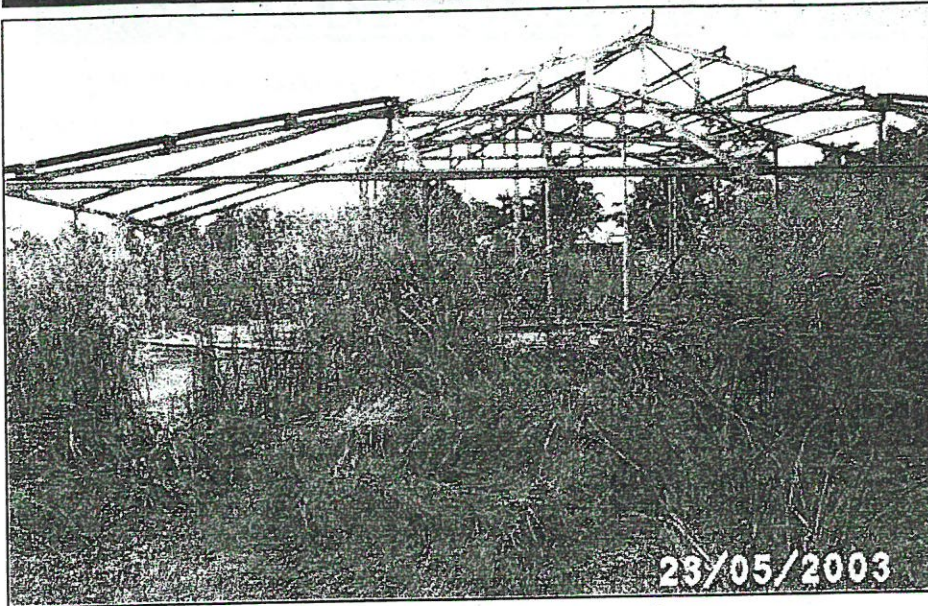
And he's done that lots of times, even with me. He got all his mob that were on the committee – all his mob who'd support him and that's how I got off the committee in 2000/2001.



*"How am I going to keep the garden? Maybe he don't want to see blackfella live good."*

*Continued next page.*





"He'll come rip your house apart."

## Media

**GM:** He came here with them blokes [media] might be ABC that day. We were CDEP working and we were starting to cut that Wheelchair house now that it was grass all over.

He said "no, no leave it, just leave it." I said "what for." He said "just leave it because we're busy." But what he wanted was to take a photo of that house with the grass and say that, well this is the effect of the ATSIC mob cutting of funding and we can't do much job. But we were doing the job.

**Q:** You were doing it without his help?

**GM:** Yeah. But he told us to leave that grass and rubbish – just leave it. But we didn't realise it was his job to pick up the rubbish too hey. Might be it go back to ATSIC, ATSIS look at this shit or something.

I said 'come on, lets go home first'. We left that lawnmower, we wait til he go. I said "next time he come around keep cutting", I got really wild with my husband here when we came back.

He said what for? I had to bring him back here and explain to him 'oh that's why it is. Well we should a kept cutting' Well too late now, the photo's been taken and everything and he's gonna blame ATSIC.

**Q:** What was he doing at 15 mile?

**GM:** He wanted to take photo in that house. He didn't go for the clean ones. He went for the really dirty houses, the ones that tea leaf stuck in the sink.

Kimby's laying around and he photograph all the toilet when drunken people make mess. He photographed it - just to say that they want money from ATSIC, more money to build up better living facilities, but it's not like that.

It's the person in the house got to keep that house clean, not ATSIC. They just give you the money to live.

You're the one responsible for your own

doings. Some of the photos he showed us at the meeting, photos of longgrass, he didn't photograph good things. Like when he come here and didn't come into my house and photograph my toilet and shower.

You know I would have put him to shame cause my toilet always scrubbed and clean. He would have taken photos of houses that side, all the drunks where they camp.

He make it look like Aboriginal people need that help, they can't do anything for themselves – and he tried to make it look like that. He took that food been left over for 2 days, he went and took photograph of it. Might be photograph in news, mob ABC.

**GM:** He took off all the connection for the taps outside. He reckon too much water being wasted. We had big water bill hey. Round about \$4000. He said because we haven't got funding from ATSIC, he just came and shut every tap off outside.

**DT:** It's his way of saying 'you can't have anymore money', so to save some money to line his own pocket.

**Q:** Is everyone still paying that essential service fee?

**GM:** Yeah! Still coming out, never stop. This happened early this year, they took the head off tap and blocked it up. But now he only put them on for certain people. He wanted people to chuck in extra \$50 each.

I said "why don't we just have our own water meters, they should put 'em every house. These houses got a tenancy agreement, we should have our own water meters and get it read, but nothing. He's cut all the water off.

The only water we got in the house for outside is from our wasing machine tap. We need it for verandahs – dog came and lay down on this verandah, like us mob, we like to clean up all around. He said he was going to come and put my tap back on, but he never did.

I said to that ADF worker 'what you doing with my tap. We need that hose for watering

the garden.' Oh sorry he said, Bernie Valadians orders, unless I can leave it and you go have a talk straight away to Bernie. If not I'll just have to shut it off.

He said 'if I don't do it I'll lose my job.' That's what he said and I sort of felt sorry for him. I knew if he didn't do it he would've lost his job. I said next time you come and warn me. I was really angry with him.

How am I going to keep the garden. Maybe he don't like to see blackfella live good, hey.

But how much water is he using in his area and how much does it cost us mob? And who's paying?

**DT:** Aboriginal money is paying. You see all the garden at his place?

**GM:** You see some of these plants, this year might be gunna die now in the hot weather.

And one time he was complaining somebody was using too much electricity round here. He came and asked me, this electricity been used here and those power and water mob said from the street lights work, nothing.

Since when I came here nothing was working and still haven't got street lights. He said a lot of power being used somewhere. He don't realise we got a community washing machine here. He reckon it come from the street lights, but street lights not working, not for four years now.

He can give authority to Power and Water to cut you power off.

**Q:** Has he done that before?

**GM:** Yeah. He's done that before. He can cut your power off and he can rip your iron off your roof and he can go in and weld the door, weld it on so you can't get in.

**DT:** He welded doors at One Mile Dam toilet too. Opposite my house on stilts so we can't open the doors and use the toilets and showers, for using up too much water.

There was one time he fixed a piece to the main pipe at the front gate and he built a pipe with PVC so he could disconnect it. All he had to do was disconnect it if no one was paying their bill to stop all the water going into camp at One Mile Dam.

Nobody had water. He done that a few times. I think he got into trouble, he was told to put it back on. It's not his property.

**GM:** He'll come rip your house apart. He ripped it when this mob went to Palmerston drinking. Couple of years ago now. When they come back a couple of days after they got the big shock.

Hey, what happened to this house. Bernie came rip him off. I think he want you mob out. Are you paying rent? How can you pay rent for those old houses. They're too old, maybe that's what he wants. He might do the same to all us mob. He might rip em this iron if we don't pay the bill.

**DT:** But he's got to be exposed.



## 15 Mile

Interviews 12 May 2003

### History

**Phillip Goodman:** Back to the early 80s the first camp was here at Mitchell Creek and this land now that we're on was Crown land. So what ADF did is sort of bought the land out for the mob was living down at Mitchell Creek so they could move up here.

So when they bought the block it was only about 3 houses first up. There was about 6 or 7 family's back then, from Maningrida mostly.

Out of them 6 families that were staying here from the beginning I was married to one of them family.

I'm from Humpty Doo but early 85 I moved in here and it was just like 3 houses here back then. House 4, 5 and 6.

I'd get a job out of 15 Mile, go to bush work, back again. Gradually it was increasing, but the same infrastructure of housing like not a proper built in toilet. Even through the wet season we gotta walk to it.

Still the same. 4 ablution blocks between 16 houses now. But back then in the 80's it was only 2 ablution block for 3 houses and then somewhere the years just rolled by.

Bernie got more funding from ATSIC or back what they called it then ABTA, and got some more houses, house number 7 & 8 and 1,2 and 3. That was that bottom camp and now some where early 90s he start on the top camp then, 9, 10,11,12 and 13,14,15,16.

But all still the same, same ablution block built in the top camps. Nothing changed.

All that first people, that Maningrida mob that moved in from that creek, some of them moved away, moved back to the outstations, some of them died you know poor bugger, from waiting for changes that ADF promised them.

'In the future we're gonna buy you this block and buy you houses, better accommodation.' That was in the 80s and he's kept saying to them 'we're gonna build more good houses, brick houses' you know, with toilet built in to stop you going in the wet season to the ablution block.

But that promise - we still here, we still waiting. And now in the millennium year of 2000, now that ATSIC put pressure on Bernie, now he started to renovate them early 90s house's, that one that got built in



*Phillip Goodman: "We had to cut all the grass with the push mower."*

the 90s -13,14,15 and 16. And they gonna put 2 extra new houses with toilet built in it.

Like what we sitting on now, these houses is gonna be all wait till he gets more funding, that's another promise. He reckons next year. Well look, the promises came from 85, 18 years eh. 18 years, now we got renovated house. I mean, that promises, you have to wait for another 18 years for that promise again?

He said he's gonna find a way to get funding to knock down these other houses here - 9,10,11,12 and build a better house you know, with toilet built in them. So we don't have to go to ablution block in wet season every time.

It's very hard for the old people. We've got asthmatic, heart problems, and people on dialysis. You see that wire mesh all round the houses, water going in when rain time and the wind, it's really bad for the old people.

We got my Mother living in the house 8 - her septic problem is bad. The waste where you wash up plates and left over water, it's not sinking down to the ground, it's rising up. 44 gallon drum at the back that's all.

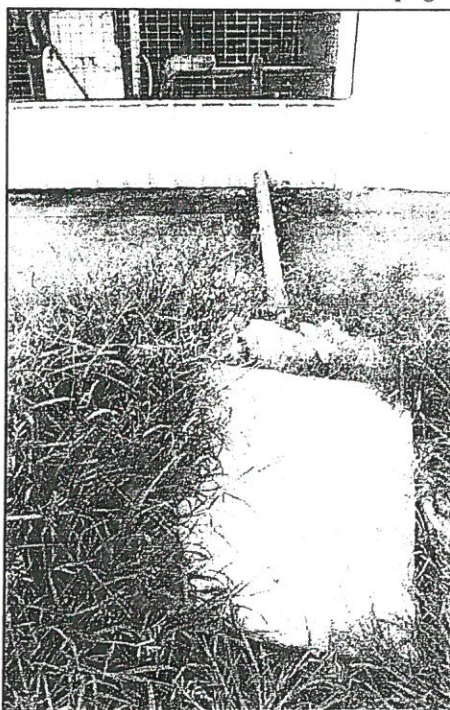
I got an older sister staying with my mum. My mum's a heart patient, I was the one took her down to Adelaide to get a bypass and she's on medication and my sister is on dialysis.

They living there 3 years now, but the house been there a long time. We've spoken to health department but I don't know what they're gonna do. We're waiting for health mob too, you know Danila Dilba mob.

We've spoken to Bernie about this problem before ATSIC haven't cut his funding. Before everybody found out there was something wrong with him. We'd say 'can you do something about that septic problem', but he say 'we're gonna do, we're gonna do it'. That's like 3,4 years ago. Nothing.

Now ATSIC caught up with him, and cut his funding, he's turned the table around and he's saying 'oh, it's ATSIC fault'. But ATSIC always given him money and where's the money gone? He should have fixed that problem.

*Continued next page.*



*House 8 Septic problem: "44 gallon drum at the back, that's all!"*



## *"He should move on in his life and hand this organisation back for Aboriginal people to run it, the way we want it."*

In 1994, I got a job as a parks and wildlife ranger at Fogg Dam. I was working there for 3 and a half years. But before I went to that job, I was a representative of this community.

I was an ADF Committee member. We used to talk about funding and he used to speak to us like 'we gonna find funding and we gonna upgrade the houses, put louvres in them for better ventilation for old ladies and maybe we might build toilets in them'.

This is coming out of his mouth in the early 90s you know and it goes far back to the 80s saying things like that. And we'd say yeah, good idea, we'll wait.

We waited, we waited, and things got worse and nothing ever happened.

Everything he [Bernie] says goes. What he say is 'um, it's a bit difficult. Why don't I take it back and I'll fix it'? We say 'Bernie, what do you reckon if we use your tractor?'

He say 'Oh, there's problem. If it broke down, have you got money to fix it?' I say yes, we have. He say 'Oh, well wait on, I'll go back and fix it with CDEP'. And then he go argue with our organisation CDEP.

Bernie says to them 'You got a lot of money, why you come asking me?'

It's a political thing you know, back then I don't know.

He hasn't shown any impact towards our needs. What we need he's always turning a blind eye. He's always giving us a promise or 'I'll give you a better promise'.

Or he says, 'oh yeah, good idea but I got a better idea', and he sweeten us up, here's a food voucher, here's chicken, here's a blanket. Oh he's good you know, Bernie good. But I didn't think back then like now. I was a bit young.

I was with land council myself, ATASIC council and we helped him out a bit, me and this other guy from Western Australia. I couldn't work him out really. He was using me. He said 'hey Phillip, now you're sitting up there. Now you can help me, get your organisation to give me money - we can work together'. We spoke and we argued for ADF. He used me for inside info in ATASIC.

I worked it out and I said, 'that's it - I don't want anymore politics, I'm going straight and I'm getting the hell out of here, I'm going to get this parks and wildlife job.

And 3 years, I wanted to stay there another 10 more years but I reckon, no, this

is not for me. I know parks and wildlife is good money, it gives you a lot of good opportunity trains you.

But I had to look back to my community, why did I leave this community? I had to come back. And when I came back - same thing. After 3 years it had never bloody changed.

He took out all them outside taps in the 80s. We plug a hose from inside tap, through the gaps, put sprinkler outside. We use our sink tap to make our lawn green and water our garden and our trees.

His reason was blackfellas use up too much tap. Little kids leave tap water on and drunkard people drink out of it and they have showers and waste water, and no one can pay that water bill.

We know we pay \$20 rent and \$20 water through CDEP. Pension people pay through centrepay - one time one old lady had \$1000 in credit for power.

He doesn't give us any receipt. I had to come back from parks and wildlife. I seen and I always hear what Bernie do.

They used to come round Monday and Friday for rubbish, but they didn't come round on time any more. That street lights been bugged for a long, long time. We have to use flashlight to get around.

He cut the power in the toilet blocks, I don't know why. Even that hall' it's got no light. At night, those kids wanna go play

there, put tape and all that, but no power.

He don't want us all to see the power bills. We give up now. I don't know. Maybe he sick and tired of hiding that extra money in his pocket.

Well what does he do for us mob? The only thing he does is come here with a lot of government people and complain towards ATASIC lately. He comes in here with opposition mob, CLP. That Burke mob. And he brings in bags of cooked chicken and food vouchers.

What do you call that? And we have to sign it. We know he's got excess of vouchers. Sometimes he just brings it, when there's somebody important knocking at his door. Like ATASIC, he comes out and do good things for us.

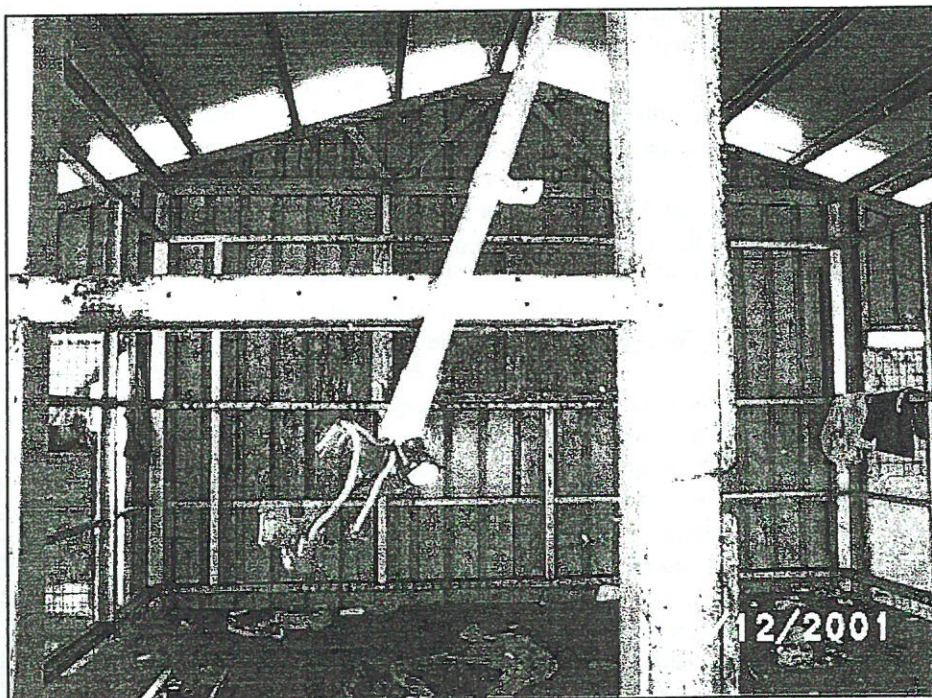
*Q: In an ideal world, how would you like to see your community run?*

Well that's a really easy question. I like it to run the better way; I don't want a person like Bernie to run it. He's a bloody crook. The whole world has got corrupt people like him.

We don't have to put up with him any more. I knew him when I was a little boy. My father knew him, but inside, I don't know what he's like. He must have been using the old people back in the early days too. We don't know.

Far as I concerned, I reckon he should leave, step down. He should move on in his life and hand this organisation (ADF) back for Aboriginal people to run it, the way we want it. Someone should appoint an Aboriginal governing system to run this place - to run this organisation ADF.

Oh, I'll tell you about training, we ask



*"We get the electric shock every time."*



# TOWN CAMP SPECIAL

*"They're all identical problems like they have at One Mile Dam, and Knuckeys Lagoon."*

him, we ask him, this was going on long time now, been nothing since the 80's n 90's. He says 'oh yeah, that's a good idea but we'll see what happens.' Promises that he's made it hasn't changed this conditions of living. We just living on promises that he made.

We had to cut all the long grass with the push mower.

Our job, in CDEP is to look after our houses, gardens around our houses. Things like that.

Not the whole block – the rest of the block is ADF concern. They're supposed to slash all the big grasses. We had to do it. Because ATSIC cut he's funding - and I reckon that's right. ATSIC cut his funding because he's misleading that organisation in a different way. He's doing the wrong thing.

That cheque hey, you savvy that blank cheque? He's got Aboriginal committee members from each community as signatories. When they have the meeting he gets the person that is the signatory to sign the ADF cheque but he doesn't tell them how much.

He writes out blank cheques. There's no figure on the cheques. That's wrong. You don't do that. You got to have a meeting for it, what is it for and how much it's going to cost. The committee gotta agree and then get the quotes and write the figure down. But nothing like that

**David Timber:** It's got to the stage where you just don't believe Bernie any more. You just give up on him. You don't believe any word he says. It's been like that for 30 years. People have given up on him. He say one thing but whether he means it or not is another thing. He's just that type of person. Very self centred, he looks after himself, whatever he says goes. He doesn't worry about what anyone else says, even the committee.

## Michael Robinson

**Q:** What happened when you mob first came here?

**MR:** Me and my wife put the power on and I seen Bernie, I was asking him about



*Michael Robinson and son*

this broken power box, cos we get shock every time. He told me after Easter. He supposed to come and fix that thing. At the moment we not sleeping there, we whole lot sleeping outside.

But I don't think he even contact them. We switch the power off because we get electric shock when it's on.

My wife pay \$100 for power every fortnight. I pay \$30 for rent. That's since last year. I need all them things to be fixed up.

All them iron been ripped off, door broken inside, back window and I got wire round the back there that's broken. But that switch mainly. It's off now. You put it on; kids might get electric shock. You plug that cord in, like fridge and you get shock.

Dennis Burke was here. I told Dennis Burke himself to walk in and check that thing out. He said to Bernie 'you better do something about that or kids will get a shock and then you'll have biggest trouble yourself'.

He said he'd do it after Easter. But waiting, nothing yet. When he come up here he was gonna kick me out of this place you see, like I wasn't allowed to stay here.

I told Dennis Burke that he trying to kick me out of here. And when we went inside to show Dennis Burke the inside, Bernie said 'Oh, we're gonna knock this thing down and build you a good house, 3 bedroom for your mother in law'.

I don't know when?

**Phillip Goodman:** There's another

promise. 15 mile promises.

**David Timber:** Bernie, he thinks for the future. He knows that the town planning for this area has already been planned for by the government.

This Palmerston development here, someone was calling to move this town camp, that was about a year ago now. And maybe keeping 15 Mile this way, it's easy to move Aboriginal people out cause it's just like a dump to them. Like they're deliberately doing this as an excuse to kick us out

of here in the first place.

Like at One Mile Dam, we're being neglected and now 15 mile looks the same. They're all identical problems like they have at One Mile Dam, and Knuckeys Lagoon.

With developments going on all around the place, these are just some of the things that we're worried about. Government want us out because of development people and move us further down or out of Darwin.

They don't want an Aboriginal Town Camp nearby to their development plan. It decreases property values.

It's an attitude of a lot of people, I feel that a lot of it is the responsibility of the government. The government doesn't want any blackfellas around town, or wherever there's going to be developed and they're reinforcing that attitude on everyone by how they act toward Aboriginal people.

**Phillip Goodman:** Bernie needs to step down. Someone high above in the government needs to see this through. Bernie needs to have a proper audit and thoroughly see through his account. We need to do something about this Bernie to move forward.

At the moment we've got no chance of doing anything, having our way. It's always his way. I hope someone out there has a good idea of how to get around this bloke because I've run out of ideas.

If someone out to support us, we could spread our voice together. Maybe we can do something about it.



# Power in the gun

## Police threat to shoot longgrassers

12 May 2003

(Name has been concealed for security reasons)

There is some disturbance coming from the police. Not many police come around but a few times and they shift us around, we move a lot. Swags and stuff.

There was one police couple who come around threatening. He said, 'you better get out; move away or else I will shoot.' He threatened us. He was so powerful we couldn't even talk back to him so we had to move away.

I think that this message should go to Larrakia Nation to Northern Land Council

and to Police Commissioner.

They should tell police who are on duty not to threaten Aboriginal people living in the Longgrass and shift people around. They should be on duty on the streets, look after fighting and traffic and accident, whatever their duty.

They should not threaten people who are living in the Longgrass. That was on Friday, man and the woman police. A lot of people know them very well.

They come and they told us to move away. If we wouldn't have moved he said that he's going to burn our swags and clothes and properties, and if you don't

move I am going to start firing - gun.

He said that he gunna shoot people. We heard it. There was a lot of us, that the police were disturbing, moving people around and threatening a lot of witnesses.

Many police wagon comes around and just checks us out and say are you right? - Good and thing like that but this paddy wagon, he's a really cheeky fella. He said, "I'm the worstest police that you ever knew. My power is the gun."

**Sambo's View:** Hey brother, next time ask them for their name and badge number, or get the number plate on the car coz you can report them you know.

## Consultation not dictatorship

June Mills Interview 23  
May 2003

I think its high time that people actually did consult with our people, to find out just why there are so many people in town instead of making assumptions and look at the real issues behind this whole debate - actually there's no debate.

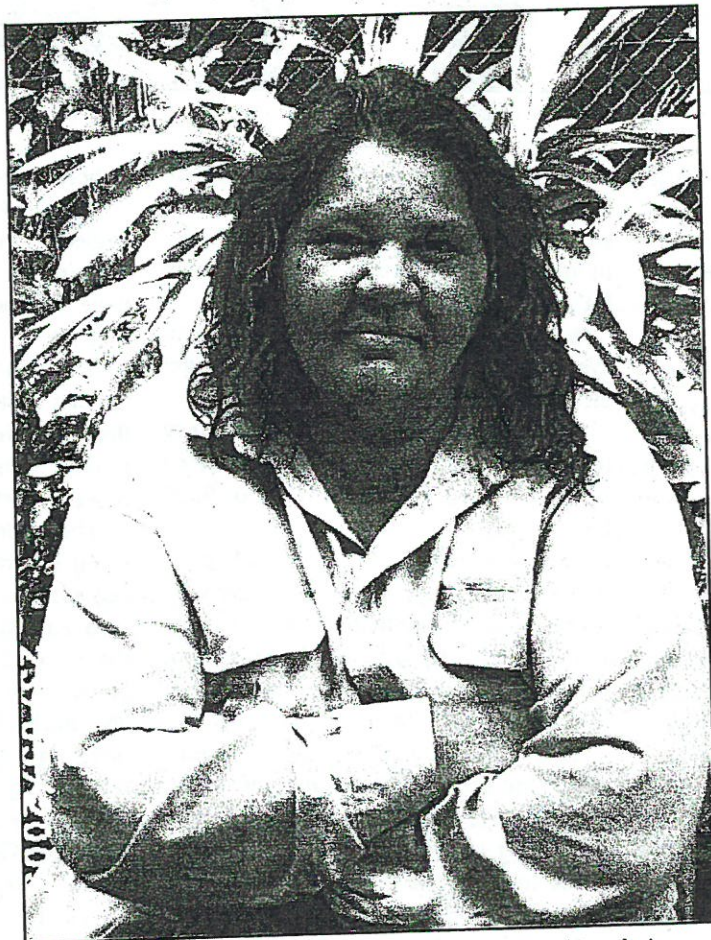
No one is debating anything. We're just being dictated to.

Its really up to the peoples from those communities to speak out.

But you know you hear whisperings about problems in the community. You hear traditional owners being not listened to, actually thwarted in their attempts to stop certain things happening like perhaps mining, traditional owners are actually overruled in their own country.

While we may not have details, you certainly hear a lot of it. Certain workers in the communities have exploited people, complete rip offs and as much as the people speak out about things, it just goes on year in and year out the people are just not listened to and treated like babies.

While I will not speak out on particular communities behalf, Longgrass Association endeavours to try and encourage our people to speak



June Mills: "Actually there's no debate. We're just being dictated to."

up for themselves.

That was our reason for having talks in town, hoping that at some stage we can come out with a very solid response to all this racism our people are experiencing at the moment in this community.

**Q:** On the TV news on the

21<sup>st</sup> May a man in a van pulled up at Casuarina way and pulled a gun on two Indigenous people. Have you got any comments to make about that?

It doesn't surprise me in the least, this has been going on all the time.

Our people are being

threatened, they've been intimidated, they've been actually bashed within an inch of their life, nothing surprises me anymore.

Nothing surprises me in terms of how much people will get away with.

Even myself I experienced an assault on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January here. A car full of white boys assaulted me and nothing is being done. Despite the fact I gave the police the number plate and all, police haven't even gotten back to me.

It's horrific of course, these are the things that our people are experiencing in the community and I totally blame the politicians and the community that allows black bashing to continue. Far as I'm concerned it encourages that idiot element out there.

People come to town for all those services that are in town. For the people that are in town, it's the best place for them to be at the end of the day and if there are people who are suffering substance abuse and if there are sick people, Darwin is the best place for them.

Why the hell send them back to their communities. All the services are here. The hospitals, if there is any social or community need, it's here in Darwin.



# Speaking out

Raintree Park, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2003

Colin K:

*Q So what sort of things have you been reading in the newspaper?*

Things like one way tickets home and stuff like that. I think it's very rude, eh, there is no need for it.

It's more or less like when night patrol was around before, you know, stay in your own place there, we'll just push you to one side and they used night patrol to push everyone along, but now they just say 'we don't want you here'.

*Q What's happening on the streets, there's city council and night patrol and now there's this Larrakia Ambassador.*

I've seen them yeah, I've got nothing to say to them. They call themselves goodwill ambassadors, you know, and here they are giving out one way tickets home - there's no good will in that at all. It's just nasty.

Well they've got the same problem in every capital city in Australia. Sure enough there are some itinerant that are really nasty people, they get arrested regularly, they are anti social, but there are a lot of people there, like the mob of people down at Mindil Beach, you know.

They've been living there for years. The council tells them to go every morning, you know. But why should they? They've lived there for years and they've done no harm there, they're just peaceful people. I know them, I go down and see them all the time. Good mob.

You can only push people so far and then people are going to burst. That's when the cops and stuff come in. Itinerants, longrassers, whatever you want to call them, they're just sick of being pushed around.

They want to live their lifestyle and I don't see why they shouldn't be able to as long as they do it in a peaceful manner, they should be right. I'm from Perth myself, and I just don't see why they should be pushed along just because Larrakia people want to get them back to their own communities.

I think Larrakia people, government, police, night patrols, councils everything, they're all in bed together. For years, they've just made all their little rules that I've never heard of happening anywhere else in Australia. Like you can't sleep out or you get a \$55 fine and stuff like that.

*Continued next page.*



Press Release 29<sup>th</sup> April 2003

Longgrass Association will hold talks with Aboriginal community representatives who are interested in working on a combined response to the Northern Territory Government, regarding its racism and discrimination against our people.

10am Raintree Park, Darwin City

Media Welcome

## June Mills:

"It's the Longgrass Association creating opportunities for our people to come in and give voice to what's happening with them, how different things are affecting them, in their communities.

I recognise the fact that our people really haven't had a voice, particularly the people who are living in the long grass here in Darwin.

I mean, the Longgrass Association is definitely there but we're creating the opportunity for people to come forward and talk about the issues.

We had fantastic representation today. We've had Jack Phillips, one of the original people that were setting up the town camps way back in the seventies.

We've also had Dave Timber come down from the town camps, One Mile Dam.

We've had Jeannie Gadambua from Maningrida, in light of the fact that we have a lot of people from Maningrida in town, she talks about some of the reasons why people are in town.

We had Bernadette Shields, Aboriginal health worker for I believe over 30 years. She and her fellow co-workers were responsible for setting up the first mobile medical unit way back in the seventies.

I'm not sure why it ever stopped.

Ralph called in from FORWARD - Foundation of Rehabilitation with Alcohol Related Diseases.

Also Alison Mills here, artist and long time supporter of our people across the board.

We've had David Mills here entertaining us all morning, fabulous music, and Barbara Mills, also a FORWARD worker. And of course Delsey, from the Koori Mail.

We've had Yuergen, the manager of Radio Larrakia, came down personally, as well as Rob, a volunteer broadcaster.

And I'm sure we'll get quite a few more people before the day's over.

It's an opportunity for educating people basically, and getting our message out.

But more importantly for us, people who are all affected by these policies to get together and talk about how things are affecting us, and if we want to do something about it, what we will do about it, and how will we do it, ultimately."



# Speaking out: It doesn't matter if you're black or white, locals get the raw deal.

I've never heard of that happening anywhere else, \$55 just for sleeping. I reckon that's just wrong. I mean, if you've got nowhere to sleep, where are you going to go? ... Walking around all night waiting for the sun to come up just so you don't get a \$55 fine?

*Q: Have you heard of people's bags being taken?*

Plenty of people I've heard, the council has just come along, grabbed their swags, chuck it all in the rubbish, make fire, have a big fire with everyone's gear, they've got no respect.

I don't think they'd appreciate it if I came along and burnt their car or something like that or went along and just burnt their house down. If they lost everything that they owned, they wouldn't appreciate it. Yet they go and do it like it was nothing.

And that's all them people have, one bag, that's all they have, that's all they need, they're happy with that. But council's not happy with it and they've got to burn it or throw it down the tip or even they just tip it out and throw it around everywhere.

Like I say, same in any capital city, there's homeless people. Some of the cops in Perth they do have a genuine concern for people. The cops up here, they've got too many double standards.

They'll pick up a black man for sleeping at a bus stop and yet on a Saturday night you see all the white people crashed out all over the place, drunk and running amok, and nothing gets done.

The council, they're full of double standards, I've seen plenty of backpackers down at Mindil Beach and yet they'll still go and humbug the blackfellas and the backpackers will be camped in their cars and there's no way they're going to get a

fine.

Down in Perth, I think they've got a lot more tolerance than they do up here because it's such a big city and it's not really based on tourism like it is here in Darwin. They bend over backwards, do flips and twists, for tourist and for years the locals are getting a raw deal, it doesn't matter if you're black or white, locals get the raw deal.

It sort of makes it hard for a lot of people to get up and kick a goal for themselves, when you've got people like the councils and the cops and all them mob trying to put you in one sort of place.

Once you get all them working against

you it's very hard to get up once you get them on your back all the time. That's all you keep doing, keep getting up but you never get anywhere because they're always there, making sure you don't get anywhere. They're on you, all the time.

It's like people get pushed so far, that's why they become anti-social I suppose. They've been pushed down so hard and so fast. When they get up they're going to look up and lash out at something.

It might be cops or it might be tourists or it might be other locals, and then it'll get written up in the newspaper and they're going to use that to come down harder on the people again.

## Alison Mills:

*Q What do you think about the stuff that's been in the newspaper recently, what sticks out to you?*

Well I just think it's cruel, I think it's unfair, I think that they're doing all this stuff to hide the real issues, they don't want to confront the real issues, the plight of the Aboriginal people, it's been going on for hundreds of years.

No programs have actually worked, health education programs, and it's just still another under the carpet thing and easy way out, and a lot of people are benefiting from money in these sorts of projects.

Just working in a school myself and trying to help with the Yolngu children, to understand English and the culture, it's just, it's an incredible task.

And I can see what's been happening to these people trying to fight that language barrier and culture, so at the end of the primary school age, what is there to do, or what's left. There is no fairness in entering the workforce for these people.

So there's big issues that they need to look at instead of just saying they're drunk and they're lying around, and they're hopeless and they're dirty and they're lazy and they're no good.

Talk to these people, let them express themselves, find out what their problem really is and what they really think about their own desperate situation and what do they want to do about it.

And give them a voice, they haven't got a voice, they've never had a voice.

So we're hoping today we're going to get the ball rolling, give them the opportunity, some confidence to start speaking out so they can help themselves and they can have an equal go at life.

*Q: So where do you think the direction of all this propaganda is going?*

I guess it starts from the local community that are complaining about the longgrassers and then it goes to the bureaucrats.

There's a lot of reasons why the bureaucrats want to jump on this, black and white bureaucrats, there's a bandwagon here, there's something to jump on here.

There's some money to be made here, some fame and fortune to be made here, and those news articles definitely feed and satisfy those sort of people.

Because longgrassers can't read that, they can read the top headline, 'go home.' They can't read the rest of it. Of course you get a few, a handful, they can read that. But do they really want the longgrassers to understand?

And so by saying 'go home,' maybe that's all they want them to hear. But yeah, I'm saying that those articles are aimed at the oppressors for the oppressors, not to listen to the people being oppressed.





# Speaking out: They don't want accommodation. They want the bush, the beach.

## Tanya Mamarika:

*Q: What have you been seeing in the media lately that worries you?*

A lot of racism, yeah a lot of racism and a lot of cruelty to Aboriginal people.

*Q: You said you've got family in the longgrass? How's it affecting them?*

Yep, big mob. My family's from Groote Eylandt. They don't really care what the white people are saying, they just want to left alone.

As long as they're left alone to do what they want to do, it's a free country, they're allowed to, and there's no problem. They see it as easier than living in a house.

Aboriginal people, they don't have a lot of belongings, that's their way of living. They prefer to live out bush than they do to live in houses. That's how they like it.

They want to stay here. They got a chance to go home but there's nothing at home for them, there's no accommodation for them, there's no jobs, there's nothing there for them to do as a community.

The community's dying and there's nothing for them to do. If they go back there, they're just going to sit around all day and do nothing.

*Q: What do you mean by, 'the community's dying'?*

Their culture's dying. The elders over there, they get royalty money, and that's all the elders see, is dollar signs. They don't care what's happening to their people.

It's the ones that don't get the royalties, like us, that care what's happening to our people. We want to change it but we can't change it unless we've got the help to change it.

*Q: When people try to speak up about things in the community, what sort of reaction do they get?*

Oh, they say that they'll do things and help them out and that, but it never gets to that point because they don't have the encouragement, that extra boost to get them where they have to go.

They haven't got role models to show them how to get there. I don't think they should be returned back to their communities.

It's a free country, Australia's a free country, if they want to stay and drink in Darwin it's their right, their business, just like any other white person what wants to drink in Darwin, it's exactly the same.

*Q: What's the accommodation situation like even if they want to get accommodation?*

They don't want accommodation. They don't want it. They want the bush, the beach. They want their land, that's their life.

City housing and that wouldn't work for them. It might work for some communities, but for our community, it wouldn't. They'd end up fighting and being too close.

They need places where they can separate, go to different places when they want to, and if you've got a house, you can't exactly just get up and leave, you've got to stay there and watch it.

So they're better living in the long grass. I mean, we've offered our house out to people come and sleep and they won't have a bar of it. No, we'll stay here. It's a good life for them.

*Q: About letters to the editor, what have you been reading lately, what do you feel about it?*

I think the people that write, I think that most of them are white people and most of them don't know what they're talking about because they haven't lived with Aboriginals so they wouldn't know.

Some of the things they say there, it's just not true. I've been around indigenous people all my life. It's a lot different living with white people. And the only way a white person's going to know is to actually live with them.

And what they write in those letters to the editor, most of it's not true, but you can tell which are the ones that have been to an Aboriginal community. Because when they write it, they know what they're talking about.

But then you get some just saying get them out, we don't need them here, and that, about itinerants, and they don't know these indigenous people have come from.

Some people, they can't go home because they'll get killed if they do go home. Some people who've got problems, they go underground, black magic.

And some people can't go home and white people don't realise that. Some people they've done something that's going to cause them or their family a lot of problems, and they can't go back.

## Ahwon:

I been up and down in Darwin, Queensland, Western Australia. Born in Borroloola. You know, I never stayed in one place. I never stayed in Borroloola for a long time - I was only a boy, I done a bit of drifting. I've been around Australia three times.

*Q: So what do you think about all this newspaper stuff that's been going on about long grass?*

It's this way, got to give a couple of old fellas a bit of, well I reckon they can't realise what's it in the paper for, all that. It takes a long time to think about it, you know. It's nobody's fault.

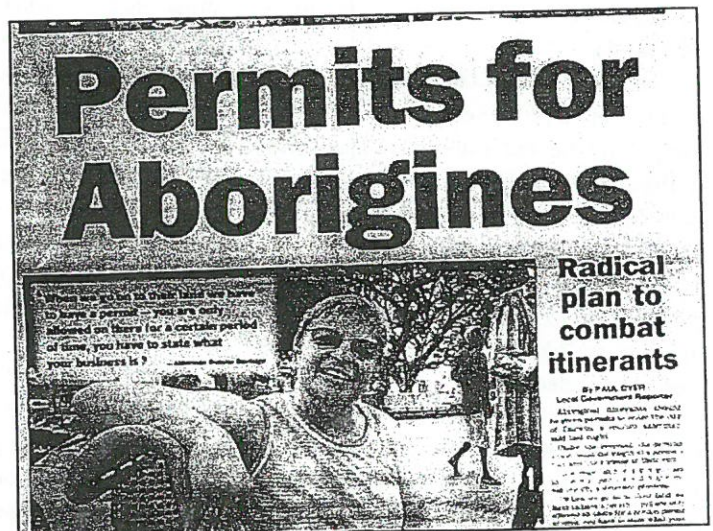
What they should do, get a big bus Darwin - when they know they're out of time, like they've been drinking too much, pick them up and take them to the hostel, keep them there till they sober up or something like that.

But the dry out centre, they've got out here now, it's a bit bugged up, you know. I can't work them out myself.

I've been there a couple of times. Too far to walk from. Too far to walk to the city. Being picked up by spin dry and they should bring them back when they sober up, bring them back where they got them from.

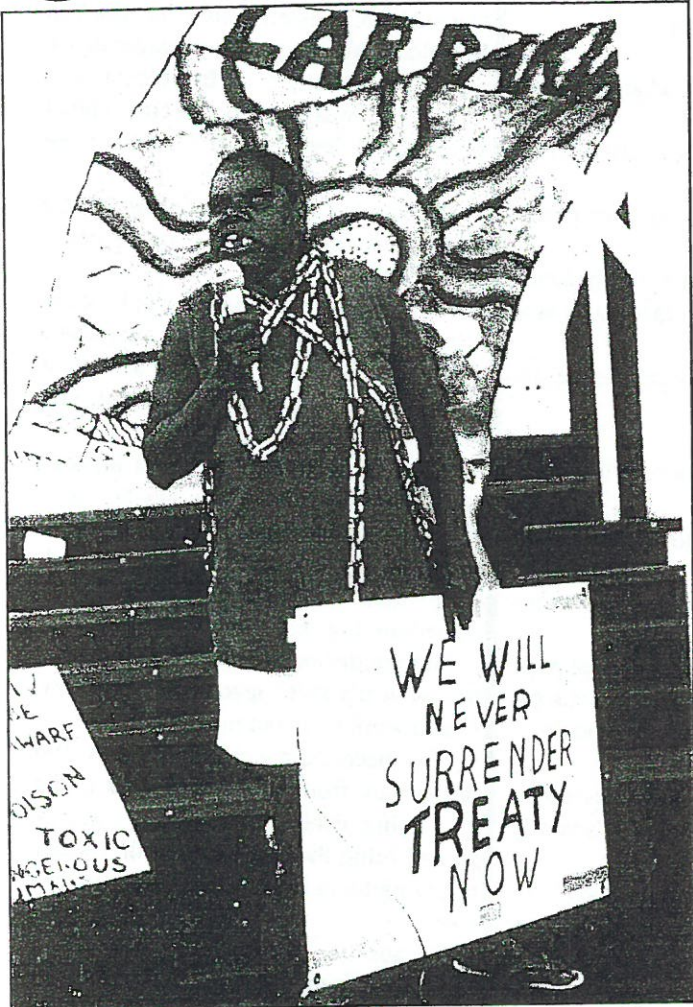
Because the poor buggers, they got to walk about a thousand miles to get to the place they been picked up from. Especially when they're crook from the grog. You should bring the poor bugger back.

Every long grass people got different way. I'm a long grass and I drink a bit but I know what I'm doing, I know when to knock off and when to go, I don't have to be picked up. But in my opinion, I reckon give them a fair go. Give them a fair go.





# Unchain me from genocide, suicide, trauma



Jeannie Gadambua outside the NT Legislative Assembly, August 17 2002..

My name is Jeannie from Maningrida. I been an Aboriginal health worker for the last 25 years, but I failed. I left the community because of the problems. I just want to read you that story that I made with my daughter:

## Letter to the Editor, NT News

Dear sir,

Now that John Howard has supposedly liberated Iraq from dictatorship and corruption, maybe he can now turn his attention to liberating our *own* people living in places like Maningrida, who have been living for so long under white rule.

There would be no need for shock tactics, just send in inspectors to find out why almost every single decision in the community is made by whitefellas.

Why is Maningrida one of the sickest communities in Australia?

Why does the Northern Land Council supports unwanted white people who have turned once strong, powerful, independent leaders into social cripples who are now expect to grovel to their white masters for a hand out.

And why genocide of the Yolnu people is funded by the taxpayers money? The itinerant problem starts in the Aboriginal community and to help combat the problem the government must assist the traditional owners gain *self determination* and independence from white domination before it's too late.

It would not cost hundreds of billions of dollars to liberate the Yolnu people, just simply support the traditional owners' right to enforce the trespass laws and let them decide what white people they want in the community, and not white people the NLC want.

Jeannie Gadambua  
11 May 2003

**Q:** Jeannie, why did you leave Maningrida?

Because of people, whitefellas, stepping all over the people, especially traditional owners, without knowing what's happening, what's going to happen to us people out in the community, including outstations.

They don't know what's happened when things happened like voting, election. People in the community get shocked without letting them know for voting, without people sit down and talk to them and explain what's going to happen.

Because of the jobs, especially young people, and housing, and people crowded in one house, like when a person get a house they're crowded in.

And the health problems, like too many people in one house, they have one person with infected sores or some other health problem, they spread in one house.

Problems been always there on and off but hasn't been straightened.

I've seen so many people at Maningrida graduate from Batchelor Collage. I mean they've got knowledge, you know and when they go back they want to get job, decent job.

They ask them (in Maningrida) and they refuse them, no you can't do this, it's hard for you because you can't do that. Maybe next month or next year I'll give you a job. That's how long people wait. They get sick of it. They fly in to Darwin.

They end up in the long grass with their close relations, like aunties, they gather together, mix with oldies.

Sometimes, while they're drinking, I still walk towards them and I hear complaints, "no, can't go back, what for? No, too hard, I'm sick of balandas."

That's what they say. I'm sick of balandas. They can't give me a job straight. I get CDEP, same money, same wages, how long I going to be getting money for this and where receipt, where document?

No receipt, no letting people know how

much you got in there, this is the amount you want to repair for house, this is the amount you need new house, how many people you wanted in the house, nothing, nothing in their ears.

I've already lost my mother because of in and out looking at his family alcoholics following them. Like living in long grass with their family, they go back home, they sit under the tree, no job, no entertainment, nothing happening, just like they're doing in the longgrass Darwin.

Why I had to blast all this story, you know, get them all out. Make longgrass talk.

They don't have to be shut up about what's happened to their home community, they're going to have to talk.

Like me, for instance, you know, for how long I've been here, and I'm still struggling. I went every office, tried, journalists, or lawyers, I've tried, nothing happening. No one responding.

The other thing is, we've been represent,



nominate on the council the vice president who can stand for and all.

They don't look at Aboriginal people and they don't look at the land owner, what he needs for his people, for his community, they don't look at him.

They look at balanda, they wait for balanda. They give them order; they listen to balanda. That's why when they come here, have a meeting, drink around with long grass and they go back.

I don't know what they come here and talk, probably they turn, different subject they talk. They don't talk straight. People out there, my people out there, are dying because of the distress.

Not much house, people living in same conditions, some people living with iron shack, new houses built up surrounding them just like circus.

And some people, they complain about new houses built on top of sacred site things, like young men business, they just destroying, bulldozing without knowing.

And next day, old people, they get up and see new houses and ask 'How come these houses? This is the place we have ceremony, this is the place where we have men's ceremony.'

Can't you mob stand up talk to balanda, put the house somewhere else where there is not vacancy. They can't look, balandas, they just putting sand all over you.

People out there like in Maningrida, the way I look the place getting tightness, and the way they struggle, they sort of slip, they find it hard for jobs and things like that, they slip and come here, get away from balandas. How hard they tell them, you can't control this, you can't handle this things.

*Q: And when will you go back to Maningrida?*

It depends. Depends if this problem settles down.

I like the white people causing the problems to move away get other people in community and teach and help Aboriginal people to run that place. But these people, I can't talk to them.

I just feel floating, sometimes I get angry with the kids because of the stress. Sometimes I sit and think about my people and ceremony and how I miss them since I haven't been back since '98.

I'm sort of getting distressed missing all my cultural stuff, and people out there, I mean most people, they're still calling out to me to go back.

But when I ask them for support they're sort of weak, they stepped all over them, they made them weak.

*Jeanie Gadambua May 2003*



*"Houses being built on top of sacred sites. bulldozing without asking!"*

***"Maningrida has just got money spent on housing and a bitumen road which will be good to keep the dust down, but Maningrida still has no spirit, no soul, no future for anybody, people are still sick and believe their place is to sit under the tree, play cards, drink grog and smoke tobacco."***

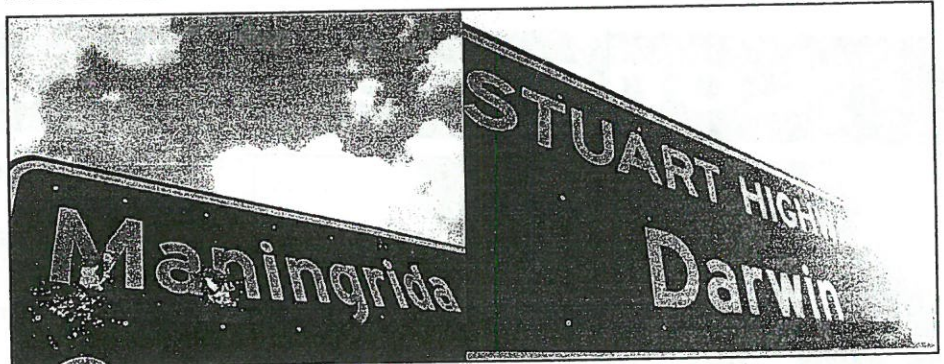
***Many people have left Maningrida and hang around Darwin. They are called Maningrida Refugees and are the largest tribe in Darwin."***

***"This is only going to get worse unless something is done. We want a full investigation into Maningrida and why the NLC and police are not doing their job with a full investigation into the corruption and money missing. People should be charged and the money returned to the community."***

*From a Letter to the Human Rights Commissioner 10 March 2002*

*by Jeanie Gadambua*

*Full Letter is posted on the Longgrass Website: <http://longgrass.tripod.com>, go to 'The People' page*



**To Longgrass Newspaper 29<sup>th</sup> April 2003:**

## **Jesus was a Longgrasser**

He was an itinerant preacher from Galilee.

The cops where after him all the time, the religious police that is.

Many times the authorities wanted to stone Jesus.

Jesus was quick on his feet as he travelled light. Jesus had to do a runner many times to stay one step ahead of the cops.

Jesus slept down at the beach many times on the shores of Lake Galilee, where he fished.

Jesus said his father in heaven sent him to save those who where lost or rejected from mainstream society.

Jesus knew what it was to suffer rejection. He had plenty of sorry times.

Jesus was the King of all creation but he was treated like worthless rubbish by all authorities.

He has come to save the Longgrassers and itinerants not the rich and famous.

*Rodney*



# Wish List: Medical Bus to visit camps in the Longgrass

In 2001 Danila Dilba faded out the Mobile Van that used to check up on homeless people living in the longgrass in Darwin and Palmerston.

This was an important service for a lot of people. It showed that some of the community did care about people living rough and reduced the amount of people ending up in accident and emergency.

The service was badly lacking in resources and had become inundated with nursing home visits. Darwin City Council was moving people round, it became hard to keep track of people and Danila Dilba lost a lot of contacts because of this.

The service now operates for the old people who can't make it into the clinic and the old people at 15 mile and Knuckeyes Lagoon town camps.

To request service of the mobile van you need to have an address ... a place to stay. The mobile van is in high demand with its current list of duties - there is no room to fit in homeless camps as well.

To provide this extra support service

Danila Dilba needs extra funding for staffing of another bus as well as equipment. A key factor to making the service a success is that people need to be able to stay in one place so the mobile bus can keep contact with people.

If you are interested to support the mobile medical van to visit people camping out, please contact the Minister for Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs, the Honorable **John Ah Kit (89014092)** who's office has carriage of the funds available under the Itinerant Project.

## Medical Bus Volunteer

I was reading Longgrass magazine and I saw that you were wanting to set up the medical bus again and I thought it's a fantastic idea.

I've been a nurse for about four years and I've worked in Darwin Hospital for the last year and half. I've worked for the Detox Unit, its now called Darwin Withdrawal Services, and I'd like to take it from and

education angle of 'teach a man to fish and he can feed himself forever'.

I have worked at Accident & Emergency - you see a lot of people coming in and maybe they might have just had a cut on their hand and their hand might be big and swollen.

But if you could make that cut heal before it gets swollen and sometimes you need surgery if it gets too bad - It would stop people having to go into hospital so often.

I think the most important thing you get taught as a nurse is primary health care which is educating people about how not to get sick in the first place.

The tenets of good health are access to water, good food and hygiene, that sort of stuff. Maybe we could even work on that.

I would be really interested to volunteer if we were able to re-establish a medical bus. Just one or two mornings a week. I know other nurses who might even have time.

Debbie, 9 May 2003

## Longgrass Live CD



Joseph Punja, Daniel S. Puruntatameri, Richard Dhdawga, James Yarmihau and Harold Porkalari playing the famous "Longgrass Man" song written by Solomon Nangumu. Harold's Longgrass band can be found at Parap and Rapid Creek Markets most weeks.

David Mills - song legend supporting Harold's mob on harmonica.

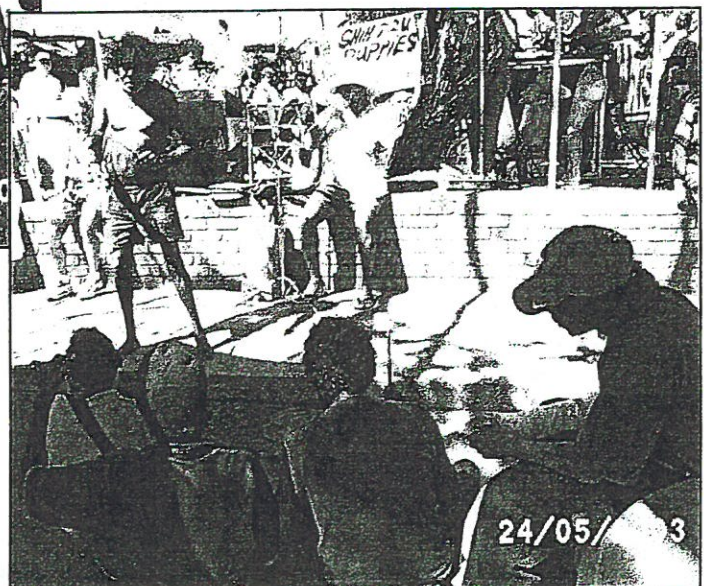
**"We want all Longgrass people to be equal"**

Harold Porkalari

Harold's mob will be recording some songs for the Longgrass Live CD at Radio Larrakia.

If you've got songs for the Longgrass Live CD please contact:

'Let's go walkabout program' with Rico 2 to 3 pm Monday to Thursdays. Phone: 89482711  
8 KNB 94.5 FM Radio Larrakia





# "One blood, one mind, one people"

Interview with Bakamumu Marika  
Chairman – Yirrkala Dhanbul  
Community Association.

LIMS Rapid Creek 21 May 2003

I've been in Darwin since last Wednesday and what I heard is itinerants are being kicked out.

I don't call them itinerants, I call them locals. They're our own people, you can't kick them out. You've got no right to kick them out.

Under the Land Rights Act it says that you're allowed to stay on you're own land, this is not foreign land, this belong to Yolngu people, any Yolngu people whatever they come from, let them be.

But kick out the Indonesian, kick someone else out of here. The white ones, not the Yolngu, this is local. It hurts, it bloody hurts.

To me, Larakia Nation is nothing. I got some Larakia people camping on my land. I never said anything, but when I come here it is a big embarrassment and head of the Land Council think he want to kick everybody out which is wrong, you cant kick your own people, own kind, that's not the way.

*Q: Who's forcing this whole thing?*

It's government, particularly John Ahkit, who's kicking these people out.

They shouldn't do that. They were voted in by us, if they want to go for another term, we'll vote them out – easy.

I'm a bad influence to these mob. There's got to be truth and honesty – two words. You've got to look at the other side of the story.

They (Yolngu people) come over because of personal problems, they don't want to get killed there by gulka, they want to live here where it's free, that's personal choice.

There's two sides of things when you talk about it. Don't look at it as Yolngu who want to live on Larakia land, but just remember they are here for a specific purpose and that when Gulka come around, they'll kill you easy.

They want to get away form there, so husband problem, wife problem and they want to come stay here; that's their life. Remember, their life is their life.

Larakia Nation shouldn't look after their life. Land Council shouldn't look after their life.

*Q: What do you think about them getting traditional owners from remote communities to come and tell them to go back to their own communities?*



*"We need water tap to turn it on here. We need the living water otherwise the kids will get sick. Sometimes they stay here for a night, camp here." YW*

That's bullshit – Land Council, Traditional Landowners, its nothing to do with.

If Larakia Nation want to talk to these people, let them walk over here, let them talk to them. Don't start bargaining with Land Council and the Traditional Owners.

I'm a chairman myself, I come here for the meeting for the last two weeks, I'm here, I'm sitting here. I'm not a big man, I'm coming down. I want to sit with these people. These my people, they are grass roots.

Why should you go up? Once you go up high, you'll fall down. This Land Council people, this Larakia Nation, I'll fall them down. I'll make sure they fall down. And John Ahkit I'll make sure he come down, finish.

I'm one of them too. I'll say that. If I can't be with them, I'm gonna be one of them.

That five million should be put it useful somewhere around; a toilet block over here, accommodation, a roof over their head.

Well look at these people, they sitting here, they gunna sleep they sleep right there, and I slept with them. I'm a high profile man and I slept with these people.

Head of the Land Council, Head of Larakia Nation wouldn't sleep with these people, I come all the way from Gove and I sleep there, I come on business and I slept with them, its nothing to do with Nunagee, its personal.

The only way you get respected is by personality. You show them something and

they'll give you something. You have to have a feeling, there's a special feeling,

I'm sitting here with you, I've got a feeling for you and I've got a feeling for him. We are all human beings.

What's wrong with these guy's (people camping Longgrass)? What are they? Look at it in your own perspective, what are they?

Don't call them Longgrassers, don't ever call them itinerants, call them Yolngu people – that's what they are, there human beings.

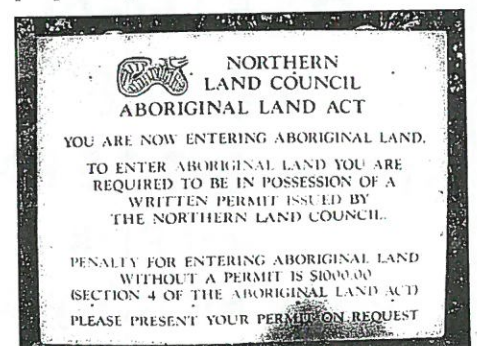
One blood, one mind, one people.

There's two sides, there's the political side, the political side is coz you want to chase money you should smell the money.

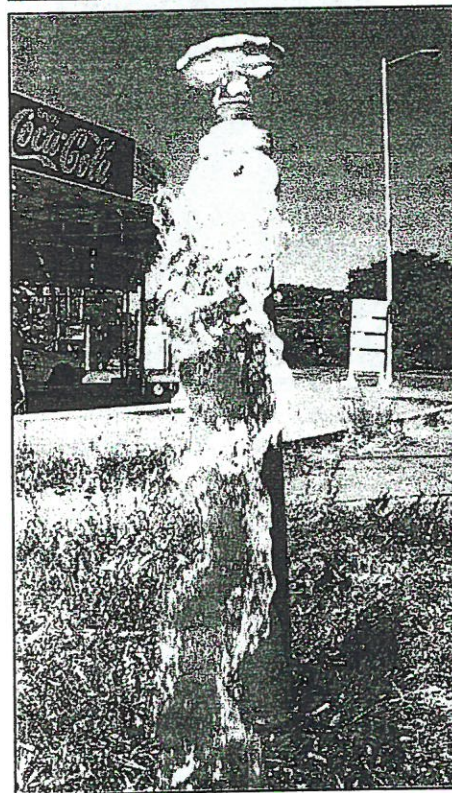
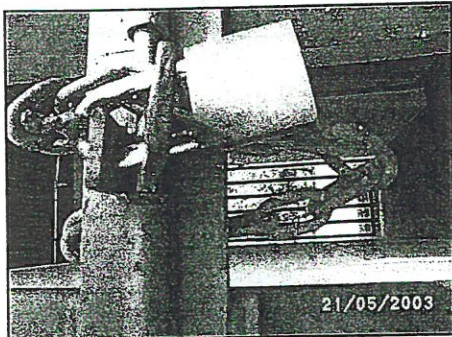
The other side, you got feelings and they're your family whoever they are, they are your family.

The Land Right Act say if you are Yolngu you are different to stay anywhere and place and they're breaking the rules, they should know.

Galarrwuy and John Ahkit should know – they're breaking the rules by kicking these people out, that's code of conduct.







"Water is the main thing - sometimes we use fire hydrants."



"We want this toilet block to be open at all times - 24 hours!"

## Tiwi Toilets

(This person's name has not been written for personal security)

We read the newspaper, all these red neck people, people complaining about Aboriginal people sleeping in the long grass, they going to use the toilet, where? Garden, eh? Because the public toilet is locked and it's supposed to be open.

People use it for good reason, especially toilet situation. Here at Tiwi doesn't open. The only people that opens toilet is sporting people and they shut it off after the sports finish.

We want Tiwi public toilet to be open. We want shower, and wash our clothes and swags.

We want this toilet block to be open at all times - 24hrs.

Water is the main thing. We just using something like a sprinkler, sometimes we use fire hydrants. We don't use taps, we got no access. They've closed all the taps, took off all the handles. That why we want good toilet, good shower and everyone can wash.

### Sambo's View

The facilities are there but they're not there to be utilised. There's taps there but they've got no handles on the tap. The toilets, they locked.

We don't walk around with the bolt cutters, we only civil people. It's a necessity, but

government, they're trying to kick Longgrass people out and they won't leave, we been here all our lives, this is our country.

Availability and access is a basic human right for everyone, black and white.

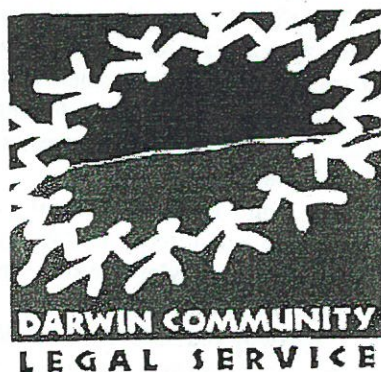
I don't know why they discriminate against the traditional people of Australia. It's an ongoing issue.

Fresh water and public septic system - so you can have a boggy and keep your kids clean and all your cooking utensils and shit like that.

We need the access to local facilities - it's wrong.



"Fresh water - it's a basic human right for everyone!"



**FREE LEGAL  
ADVICE  
ST VINCENT DE PAUL  
Stuart Park  
Every Monday at  
Breakfast**



# "Police now, they acting like KKK people"

**Peter from the Scrub**

**4 April 2003**

My name is Peter. Six o'clock this morning the police were wetting us at the church, where St Johns ambulance, the other side church – right there. Maybe 15 or 20 people and they were wetting us, the police.

*Q: Were you mob sleeping there?*

**P:** Yeah. We don't steal something, we don't break something, we were sleeping, having a rest because we were shaking – grog shaking. Two police, one lady one boy. I don't know his culture.

*Q: They were both wetting people?*

**P:** Yes. The lady had the bottle and the man or boy, I don't know him.

*Q: Did they say anything to you mob?*

**P:** Yeah. Fuck off. Just move then we went to McDonalds, we were sitting there at McDonalds. We sleep here because that church belong to us, Aboriginal people, because we all the time go to church.

*Q: Has that happened before?*

**P:** Yeah. A lot of time. They check up our bag and take all moselle, blow up, bust it.

We waste a lot of money.

*Q: How do they bust it?*

**P:** With a pocket knife.

*Q: Even if it's in your bag?*

**P:** Yes, all the time they do like that all police. Not night patrol, they good people because we report them already. But police now, they acting like KKK people because we Aboriginal people, we got no blanket, we sleep anywhere – scrub or anywhere, no blanket. We don't stop in the hostel. We got no big money, we don't get.

*Q: Do police check your bag everyday?*

**P:** Yeah, everyday. That's why I nearly break my bag, you can have it now. That's why I gave Night patrol this bag and I been get it yesterday. (pick up)

*Q: How do you keep away from police so they don't bust your grog?*

**P:** No, because they got no moderation. They can't leave us alone when we sleep. Oh they sleeping, they good people... we don't steal from them. That's our money, our grog. We wasting a lot of grog.

*Q: Do the police come to this area, Alawa oval?*

**P:** Yukka. This one good place. But night patrol come. 'You mob drink, we hide grog long way in the bush, we just sit down.

*Q: Night patrol been alright lately?*

**P:** Little bit. When we leave our bag. I got my wallet back there and the number and the bank and my phone number to Alice Springs, Raminingning, Millingimbi, Elcho

Island. They stole it and I find it just only bag mine.

*Q: They lost your ID when you left it with them?*

**P:** Yeah, no ID, no wallet for me. I got new one now. I got a lot of phone number to ring up to Yirrikala for my royalty. They stole it, my wallet over there at spin dry.

Another man went there at 6 o'clock and said 'hey, I need my clothes and blanket'. They said to look in the back where they close it in the room. That card and wallet there.

They stupid people. Silly people hey, they doing wrong thing because war coming up now. War for us – 3<sup>rd</sup> World War. Bombing at Milingimbi and Yirrikala 2<sup>nd</sup> world war – 3<sup>rd</sup> world war coming.

I don't like it police and night patrol. They're not going to check us up, because we got clothes for wife and pants there.

They're not going to check up.

That's what I'm telling you. We can't get shame. I'm not going to check up on your clothes, because we in the law and we got this one – brain.

They call themselves, that police – under the queen. Now we under the queen people too. Equal rights, yo. They treating us mob wrong way. DCC sleeping (fine) and taking bags.

I'm talking now, Peter. Come from scrub, I'm talking now, I'm from scrub – longgrass.

Then you can do answer for me. Tell them, sometimes we bag, we take all the pants for our wife. That's what they do, I'm gonna say here you can have it. You can have it now.

I'm nowhere. Peter from scrub. I'm talking now for you mob...and you mob gonna listen.

## ARTS SPACE

**Artists welcome to come here and work**

**Painting and art materials available**

Looking towards putting an exhibition on later in the year.

**Shop 1, Malak Shopping Centre**

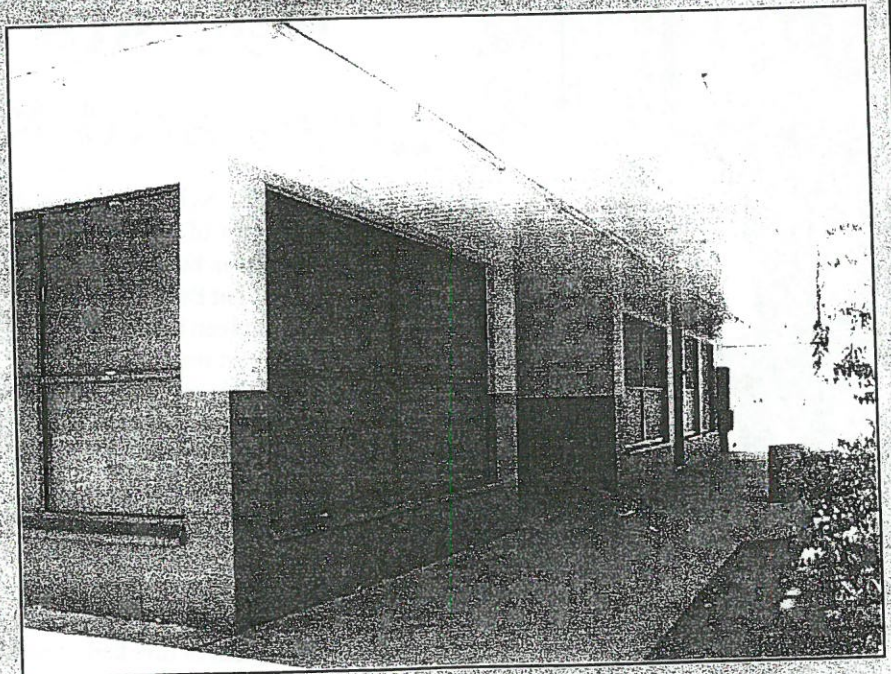
Bus 12 from Casuarina

Open Monday to Friday

**Look out for the Aboriginal Flag**

**Contact June Mills 89274190**

Sponsored by 'Itinerants Diversionary Programs'



*The Arts Space at Malak Shops*



# Busting Grog

**Gerry -Longgrass Darwin**  
(Name has been changed  
for security reasons).

Yesterday we got 4 moselle.  
It wasn't even open.

Policeman came round, start  
putting the knife in the box and  
ripped it open. And we  
spending the money for that?

We were sitting waiting for  
someone to walk back from  
here then off to beach. Coppers  
came around and told us. You  
shouldn't drinking but we  
wasn't drinking, they just came,  
put a knife in the box, ripped it  
open.

That box wasn't even open,  
they seen it, we didn't even fill  
up a bottle; they just stuck the  
knife in it and off.

*Q: Where is the pressure  
coming from?*

Only police. Night patrols  
just come around, they just tell  
us not to fight, when we get  
drunk, if you want the shelter,  
come in.

It's your decision if you want  
to go in and stay. Police come  
round and they just put a knife  
in your box or tell you to tip  
your bottle, move us from camp  
to camp.

We was moving from a  
couple of years now. From

when we was camping at Lee  
Point, they kept moving us  
around, where can we stay?

The Aboriginal hostel  
doesn't like Longgrass people  
to stay in the hostel. We have  
money to pay for accom-  
modation but they ignore us.

I dunno someone have to  
fight for us to stay in the hostel,  
we tried it couple of times but  
they don't want us in there.

One police lady in uniform  
she always came around and  
say Gerry are you right? You  
want to stay here keep your area  
clean.

Motorcycle police they the  
ones that start everything.

Also the Larrakia Nation  
they want us to go back home.

*Q: Did they come and see  
you?*

Yeah if you want to go home  
there's some \$ there - just you  
go to Larakia Nation or Johnny  
Ah Kit office - they'll do some  
transport.

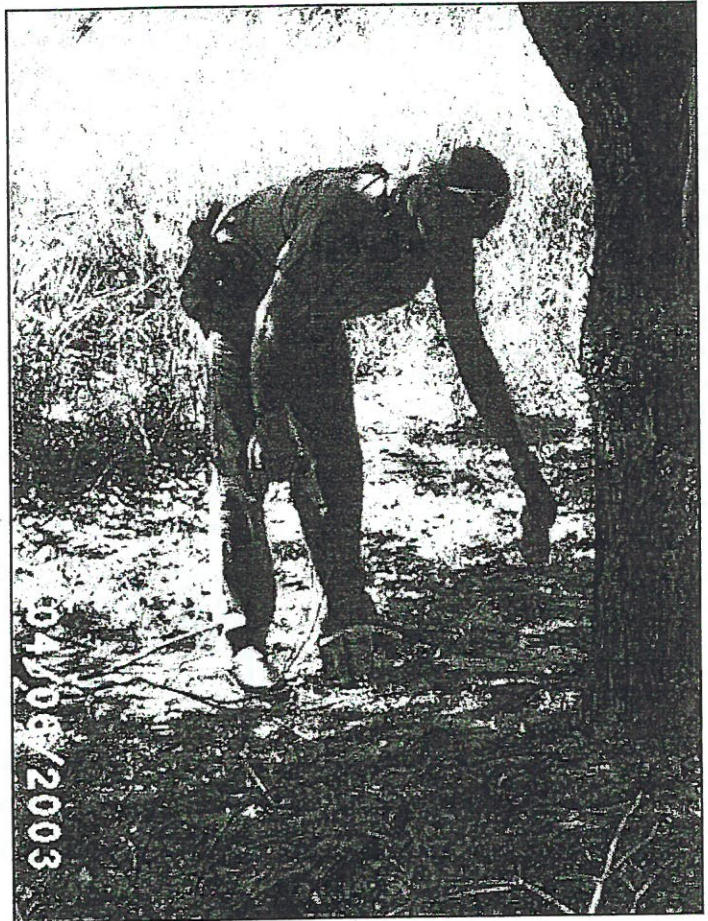
But one thing wrong when  
us people want to go back home  
we get killed form our family.  
That's why we live in Darwin.

We love Darwin, just to stay  
alive. We just go for a funeral  
and back, we don't want to die  
out there. We want to stay alive  
and live long, till we get to old

age, then we'll be right, instead  
of dying young.

There's a lot of problem at  
home, ceremony and too many

fighting out there - Aboriginal,  
what you call it, witch craft or  
something like that, but things  
happen.



*'Policeman - Shane Opened 12 VB cans and tipped then on the  
ground at Waratah Oval, 4th June 2003.*

*One man who protested about the waste was taken away in the  
paddy wagon.*



*Diane Walker and Eric Kerr.*

## Racists is well and alive and kicking good

My Name is Eric Keith Kerr, I was born 1934. That makes me 69 this year in August.  
Now I hear a lot of people talking about the Aboriginal people, I hear 'just get a  
permit' and 'send em home' etc etc.

Down at the Front Beach Hotel the bar man serves drunken people and blind drunk. I  
seen it last night, I seen it on the 8th of May, serve drunken people, blind drunk and come  
and seen blokes belt their wives.

One particular bloke, I'm not saying the whole of the people that work in the bottle  
department, there's one very very significant perpetrator that services drunken people.

I seen my niece this morning with all busted eye up. There's no justice in that.

I want to know if he's going to serve the people like that, down the Front Beach Hotel,  
he shouldn't be selling things like that that's creating bashing up my family.

Well he's not doing it, but the grog he selling when they're drunk.

I want to bring the newspaper down, I gunna bring my niece, she's all busted up like  
that. I want to put the camera on him today. Racists is well and alive and kicking good.

You read so much of drunken people - Clare Martin and Denis Burke they want a put  
vouchers on people and eliminate their social money (Centrelink) and they want to buy  
this and that, but can you do that?

They can't - it goes against people's rights.



# Smoke Screen

Johnny AhKit and the Johnny come lately  
Stupid ideas are affecting us greatly  
The always stalking anti social behaviour  
And the Longgrass are wondering who will be  
their saviour.

Will it be Denis or will it be Claire  
A little bird told me they really don't care  
They really don't want to be seen as a racists  
So they pay the young elders to cover all basses  
Effectively blowing a growing smoke screen  
To hide the fact that they really are mean

They really don't care for a logic solution  
They'd rather invest in some gas air pollution  
They're almost there it's almost completed  
When it's ready to roll and contracts concreted  
We'll be looking at longgrass through heavy gas masks

I pity Clare Martin when somebody asks  
We thought that the damage was drunken itinerants  
Not chemical gasses and airborne pollutants  
So you think you and your colleagues are smart  
Do you think that we are really that stupid?

*June Mills 2003*

# I'll take the rap

I'll take the rap and all of your crap  
And try my best to pick up the pieces  
You can keep your goddamn faeces

While you sell our land from under our noses  
While we water our gardens with our green garden hoses  
While we dream up ways to pull up weeds  
When we know darn well that's not what it's about

Cause we're trying to sleep in a broken down bed  
And your man made nightmare is filling our head  
With terrible angst and real frustration  
On how to stop you're next creation

Which is bound to make some more people homeless  
And we all know that you just couldn't care less  
Cause your just about kicking all the longgrasses  
We'll you can just go and stick it up your asses

We'll give you a fight you wouldn't believe  
We'll even make the night patrol leave  
Cause your not doing anything right  
That're taking our people whenever they like

They take them down to the coconut grove  
And we all know that the same fucker who drove  
That empied out my last bit of moselle  
I'll hit him so hard that you'd think a big tree fell

Here they come with their stupid white gloves  
You'd think they where cupids who want to make love  
But rest asured that it is none of the above  
They're a bunch of fuckin heroes  
Trying to act like fuckin doves

*June Mills*

# "We just want decent conditions"

Raymond and  
Janice, 9 May 2003

Raymond: We've  
been long enough in the  
scrub and we've got  
supporters here. Ninyip  
Murungi? Balaiya and  
my uncle, they been  
talking a long time and  
my mother Dulcies,  
that's why we're here.

You know we're  
living here as longgrass  
people, there's snake,  
everything and mosquito  
biting us.

I take my people, like  
in longgrass, but they got  
home at Alawa, that's  
why I don't drink there,  
I want to stop here with  
my families, with my  
daughter Sandra, I want  
to stop here.

Conservation mob  
come round, even they  
kick us out from here  
and now today I'm  
struggling. I've been  
here many years. We just  
want to get decent  
conditions.

Janice: All the  
government, we can't




*Raymond, James and Janice.*

understand them, why  
they are thinking about  
us, we can't understand,  
we only understand  
ourselves in longgrass,  
that's why we always  
taking care of us, all the  
longgrass people,  
because the government  
doesn't matter or care

about us.

We love this land, we  
love Darwin, we can  
sleep in the longgrass,  
we love.

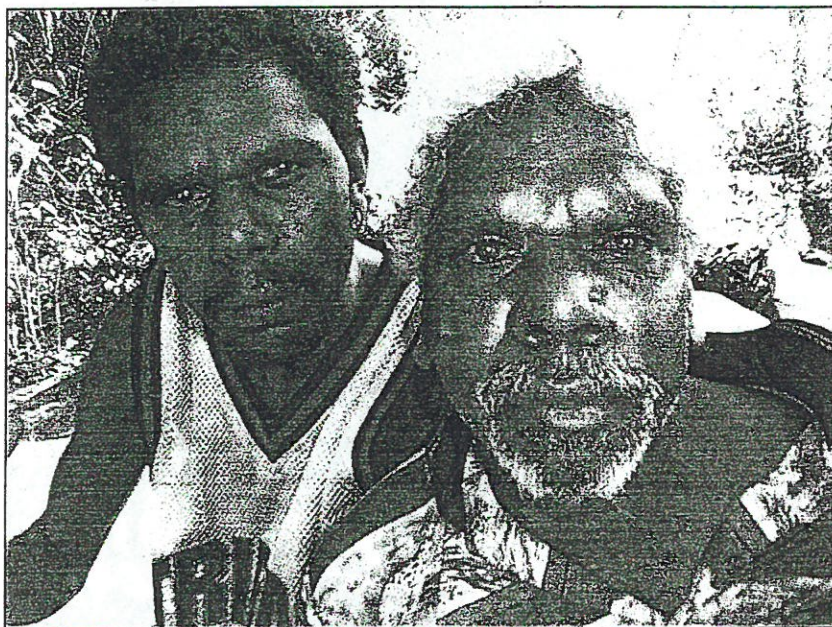
Its our business,  
regardless of black or  
white, its our culture,  
we belong in the  
longgrass.



T MAXWELL  
Passed away 9<sup>th</sup> May 2003  
A good life in Darwin  
Your family and friends remember you  
Rest In Peace



# "black and white, walk together, fight together, survive"

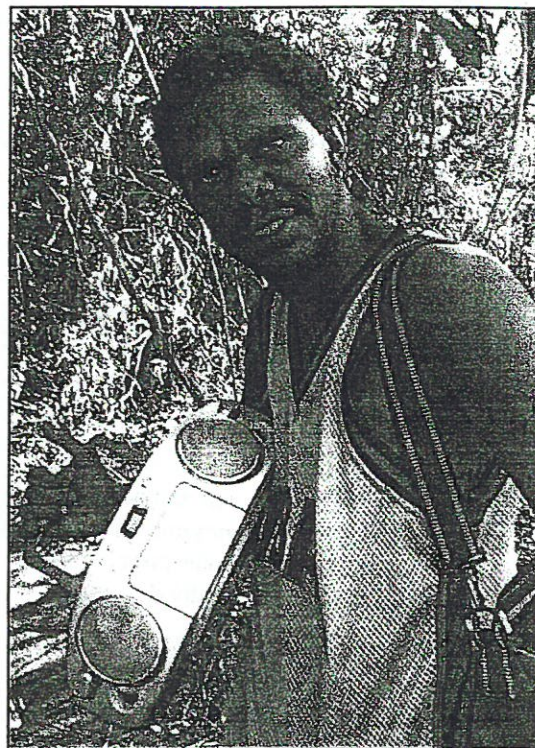


*Mr T and his son Mr C.*

My name is Mr T and I am talking about the system that governs us day by day, it could be any one in this situation.

It's not necessarily about discrimination black or white or brindle, but it's the human rights of people, human beings, as one, black and white, walk together, fight together, survive, to nourish the mother universe, this world, before anyone or any power will pollute or blow it up.

We got difference, culturally, but we can understand our cultural differences and when we come together and get that understanding together. Thank you.



Mr C would like to share the words of Lucky Duby with anybody out there who cares to listen.

## **Lucky Duby:**

This song talks about the racial discrimination, what is happening between blacks and whites.

You see then we read in the bible about the creation of the earth, the bible tells us that man was created in the image of God.

But it does not tell us whether God was white, black or coloured, Indian, whatever. When I see a black man, I see the image of God, I see a white man, I see the image of God. I see an Indian, I see the image of God.

Coloured's and everybody, we are the images of God, God is one. That is why we are his children, we've got to be together as one.

The only thing that is keeping us apart is apartheid and so tonight we are going to bury apartheid 69 feet down and put up a very big rock.

This song is called 'Together as One'.

## **— Women's shelter needed —**



"We need the Women's Shelter for overnight stay like the one at St Vinnies - but it's only for men.

The've got one in Nightcliff to but only for men.

They got the womens shelter for Domestic Violence but they can't take us. The Sisters in Parap - we can stay there for a couple of days, then we have to go.

We need it for dry out - get away from grog, washing, shower, when your sick. But we need it this area - Stuart Park. Coz to far to walk from other places. Close up to town.

*Port Keats Ladies 2/6/03*

## **Larrakia Ambassador**

"They told us to go home.

I grew up in Darwin.

It does hurt my feelings.

They shouldn't be doing that."

*SV 2/6*

**Longgrass Association**  
C/- Darwin GPO, NT, 0801  
Website <http://longgrass.tripod.com>