Ms Rosemary Timber
President and Public Officer
Puliyimi Incorporated
20 Widdup Cresecent
Palmerston
NT 0830

**30 July 2020**

To the Hon. Gerald McCarthy MLA
Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development; Minister for Public Employment
PO Box 796
Tennant Creek
NT 0861

**Re: Concerns regarding the Aboriginal Development Foundation**

Dear Minister McCarthy,

1. I write to you as the Public Officer and President of the newly formed Puliyimi Incorporated (Incorporation number IA3594) (“**Puliyimi Inc**”).
2. The primary objective of **Puliyimi Inc** is to obtain the rights to hold Special Purpose Lease 454 (**the lease**). This is the lease of Lot 5027 in the township of Darwin. The One Mile Dam Community Town Camp (**One Mile Dam**) is situated on Lot 5027.
3. **The lease** is currently held by the Aboriginal Development Foundation Incorporated (ABN 42 708 406 892) (“**ADF**”). The lease was granted to the **ADF** in perpetuity in 1978. The **ADF** is the holder of a number of leases for town camps in the Darwin region.
4. In the early days the **ADF** was active in maintaining decent living conditions for the residents of **One Mile Dam.** The community was looked after to a reasonable extent, however over time this work has diminished. Things are at a point now where no representative of the **ADF** has visited **One Mile Dam** for many years.
5. Due to this neglect very few upgrades or repairs have been made on the houses at **One Mile Dam.** Some of our residents reside in poorly maintained shacks with no running water. We have been told that the government does not consider these premises to be dwellings fit for human inhabitants and so these are not counted as houses in the community. We can assure you that these shacks are our homes, in which many of our members were born, raised, and intend to live in for the years to come.
6. **Puliyimi Inc** has formed out of a community led initiative in the hope that community members can become more involved in the decision making processes regarding **One Mile Dam**. The voting members of **Puliyimi Inc** consist only of current and former residents of **One Mile Dam**. It is our dream that in the future all of the residents of **One Mile Dam** will be able to live in our homes with the minimum standards of dignity that most other Australians enjoy.
7. We have tried on many occasions to raise these issues with the **ADF**. In the last decade or so we have found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make contact with their Public Officer, Bernhard Valadian, or any other executive member of that organisation. We are aware that a number of members of the **ADF**, including those from other communities the **ADF** holds the lease for have encountered similar difficulties. The **ADF** has been referred to in the media as a “*zombie organisation*”. One such article from 2015 is enclosed with this letter and marked **“Annexure A”.**
8. Not only is the **ADF** unwilling to engage with us to discuss what is occurring in our community, but they do not seem to have a functioning executive committee, nor are they holding meetings or submitting financial reports as required by the *Associations Act 2003* (NT) (***Associations Act***).
9. We are lawfully entitled to be informed of what the **ADF** is doing but this is not happening. We are told that Bernard Valadian is engaging in talks about our Community’s future without consulting the members of the **ADF**. It appears that Bernard Valadian is running the **ADF** by himself in continuing breach of many of the provisions of the ***Associations Act****.* We are currently considering our legal options in response to this.

Our Request

1. We believe that the **ADF** is failing in its legal and moral obligations to its members. This failure is resulting in our Community languishing while others advance.
2. We respectfully ask that you put a stop to this.
3. We are of the view that it is well past the time that the **ADF** was dissolved due to these flagrant breaches of the ***Associations Act.*** Our request is that upon the dissolution of the **ADF**, **the lease** be transferred to **Puliyimi Inc**.
4. **Puliyimi Inc** simply hopes to obtain **the lease** for **One Mile Dam** so that it can properly engage with stakeholders and service providers and fulfill the role that the **ADF** no longer fulfills**.** Unlike the **ADF, Puliyimi Inc** would be able to adhere to our legal obligations and requirements of internal governance, all the while involving local decision making in that process.
5. We are now the best placed organisation to hold and administer the lease. We have both the dedication and the capacity to do so.
6. We understand that your Government also supports local decision making.
7. We humbly ask for your support in this process.

**Puliyimi Inc**

1. The constitution of **Puliyimi Inc** is enclosed with this letter and marked “**Annexure B**”. I kindly ask that you take note of our objectives which are consistent with a benevolent organisation established for Community development rather than profit.
2. The cultural significance **Puliyimi Inc** is underscored by the presence of Aboriginal Sacred Site 5073-115 on the land, registered under section 29 of the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1984* (NT). The registration documentation of Aboriginal Sacred Site 5073-115 is annexed and marked “**Annexure C**”. As is noted in **Annexure C**, the spring which feeds the dam is a place of Barramundi dreaming, and ceremonial activity was, and is still, performed on site. In securing **the lease Puliyimi Inc** aims to both encourage and preserve these cultural traditions.
3. The English words for *Puliyimi* are “White Bellied Sea Eagle”. *Puliyimi* is a totem of the Muriamu people. *Puliyimi* is a symbol of righteousness and cleanliness. The *Puliyimi* maintains its territory and cares attentively for its young. **Puliyimi Inc** has taken this name as these are principles the organisation will strive to embody.
4. *Puliyimi* is also the name of a very important song that is sung during ceremonies. If we were able to secure the lease this transfer would give cause for a big ceremony at **One Mile Dam**. People from Belyuen and other places will come for this ceremony. There will be traditional dancing and the people will sing the song *Puliyimi*.
5. If these ceremonies were to take place **Puliyimi Inc** would also want to invite you, Minister McCarthy, and people from the media, to come and join us for these celebrations. We would want to thank you for assisting us.

**Puliyimi Inc’s** Plans for The Future

1. **Puliyimi Inc** hopes to improve the housing conditions under which our members live. We would consider other benevolent uses for the land in addition to community housing. **One Mile Dam** wishes to contribute to the Northern Territory. **Puliyimi Inc** would welcome discussions with the Northern Territory Government on whether a pro-social project, such as the construction of a Residential Rehabilitation Facility, Sobering Up Shelter, or Women’s Safe House, could be suitable for part of the land.
2. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

**Rosemary Timber**

**President and Public Officer**

**Puliyimi Incorporated**