

P.O. Box 4751, <sup>86</sup>  
DARWIN

6 / 11 / 74

The Secretary,

Northern Land Council.

P.O. Box 330

Darwin

Dear Sir,

There is something the Council should talk about now  
there is going to be Land Rights in town areas.

Some of us have been trying to get places to stay for  
many years. We are still trying.

But people come in from all over the Territory and they  
come to camp with us sometimes. Now and then we have arguments.

One example is at Railway Dam. This area is too small  
to be a camp for people from every place but because people hear  
about it being a camp they come down to Railway Dam.

Especially the people from Port Keats.

Railway Dam people have an incorporated association  
called RAKNURARA BOOTONG ASSOCIATION <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ they can not have councillors  
with any authority to look after the camp until they get the land.

What we want the NLC to talk about is that every settlement  
or group of tribes who have people coming to Darwin should be thinking  
about getting some land put aside in Darwin for their people to  
stay in town. If Port Keats had tried to get a place in Darwin, there  
would not be the trouble we have with them coming to stay at Railway  
Dam. Also we know the people at Knuckeys Lagoon do not want their  
area to become like Bagot, with people from all over arguing and  
crowded together.

Yours sincerely,

W. S. Day  
Secretary

ROY MUDPOOL  
(PRESIDENT  
RAKNURARA  
BOOTONG ASSOC.)  
(RAILWAY DAM)

for KNUCKEYS  
LAGOON  
CAMP



LETTER

H

WATERS, JAMES & COMPANY  
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

N.T. PORT AUTHORITY BUILDING  
HARRY CHAN AVENUE, DARWIN N.T.  
P.O. BOX 380. TELEPHONE 81 5544



ATHOL GEOFFREY JAMES LL.B.  
JOHN BASCOMB WATERS LL.B.

OUR REF. JBW/JB 73/162  
YOUR REF.

① LI  
LAP 8370 ② L98  
⊗  
4012/11

The Secretary,  
Department of the Northern Territory,  
P.O. Box 2650,  
DARWIN, N.T. 5790.

December 31, 1973.

Dear Sirs,

Re: Raknurara Bootong Association

Thank you for your letter of the 10th December, 1973.

We enclose herewith a plan showing the extent of the land requirements for the campsite and tourist area which land is the subject of the claim now submitted to you by the Raknurara Bootong Association.

Also enclosed is a copy suggested site layout prepared by Mr. Peter Dermoudy who has been engaged by the Association.

As you will see, this particular plan has been prepared with considerable imagination and also in close consultation with the Aborigines who normally live in this area or frequent it.

The Aborigines suggest that once the lease has been granted, the project as set out in Mr. Dermoudy's plans should proceed in four stages. Firstly an ablution block and shelter, secondly beautification and landscaping, thirdly a car park and tourist facilities and fourthly a kiosk and jetty.

Our clients are confident that if their application for special purpose lease is viewed sympathetically they can obtain funds from the Aboriginal Development Trust Fund and other sources to proceed with the most imaginative design which Mr. Dermoudy has put forth.

*in envelope at cover of file*

We enclose herewith a photograph of a model which Mr. Dermoudy has prepared which shows the basic housing units proposed. This has been shown to the aborigines and the suggested designs have been received with some considerable enthusiasm.

The idea of the units is that they would serve a multi purpose roll with the use of various internal partitioning and could be used as a living unit, bedroom unit and those which will contain some plumbing will also contain a toilet unit. →

page 2

As can be seen, the design makes use of modular construction and it is hoped that the lightweight concrete panels can be constructed by aborigines on the site using a light gauge mesh reinforcing and a novel form of insulation made from empty soft drink cans.

This is undoubtedly a novel idea but by no means impractical. At this stage we should be most grateful if you would kindly meet with Mr. Dermoudy and Mr. Waters of this office together with some of the aborigines and a representative from the Aboriginal Affairs Department to discuss this concept in depth and so that the matter can be put to you more fully.

We have to hand other detailed photographs of the model prepared so that the full extent and breadth of Mr. Dermoudy's conception can be fully appreciated.

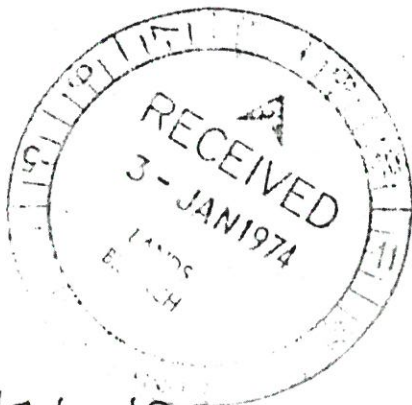
The area of land requested broadly covers the same northerly portion of the railway dam area as was requested by the Baptist Homes Trust, but as can be seen it is not intended to deny the general public fully one half of the access to the dam and has been repeatedly expressed by the aborigines that they would not be opposed to having white persons come on to the area and even camp there provided that the aborigines had exclusive control of the area. As you will be aware some tentative attempts have been made by the Wargade, Larrakeyah and Brinkin peoples to stage coroborees for the benefit of tourists and this would provide an ideal colourful venue for such displays.

It would be one area in the centre of Metropolitan Darwin where there would be a concerted attempt to maintain aboriginal conditions and where the aborigines could maintain a distinctive identity without white supervision or direction.

Please let us know when it would be convenient for the meeting suggested earlier to take place and please let us know which of your department personnel would be attending.

Please also let us know what further information you require in support of our application. We would be only too happy at this stage to discuss the sort of timetable you would require for the development of the area and what minimum financial investments you would require.

Yours faithfully,  
WATERS, JAMES & COMPANY



J. B. WATERS.

7/1/74 JDT

What is the present position regarding the rezoning of this area as a camping area? If area is not to be rezoned - see your letter of 4/1/74 to Rex Kent on LAP 7463 - there seems to be little point in holding discussions with applicant as it suggests the area now sought is very different to that sought originally



XXXXX 81 9074

23 October 1974



The Secretary,  
Rakmurara Bootong Association,  
P.O. Box 4751,  
DARWIN. N.T. 5794

Dear Sir,

Your letter dated 14 October 1974.

Payment of the balance of \$2,000.00 of your grant was made on cheque number 1083198 dated 14 October 1974, and should now be in your possession.

The claim for payment was received by the Finance Section on 1 October 1974 and payment was processed accordingly. A period of two weeks is quite normal from the date of receipt of an account to the date of issuing of the cheque by the Department of the Treasury.

Part of the delay of your payment was also caused by the transfer of financial duties from the Department of the Northern Territory to this Department.

The delay and any inconvenience it may have caused you is regretted.

Yours faithfully,



(G. MARTINSKIS)  
for Director

P.O. Box 4751,  
Darwin.

10-6-75

The Interim Land Commissioner,  
Court House,  
Darwin

Dear Sir,

Enclosed please find.

- (a) My submission regarding the  
Railway Dam Aboriginal Campsite
- (b) Map of claim area (shaded green)
- (c) Newspaper cutting.
- (d) Copy of Certificate of Incorporation.
- (e) List of members (1973)

Mr. John Waters I L B informs us that  
you will be considering the case next  
Wednesday at 10 am.

Yours faithfully,

W T Day

(Secretary RBA)

## List of Members (1973)

Roy Mudpool  
Maggie Mudpool  
Robert Muringa  
Jack Gordon  
Bruce Pott  
Nim Adelaide  
Mickey Smiler  
Billy Munji  
David Nilco  
Barry Nilco  
James Nadpar  
Paddy John  
Peggy Wilson  
Maggie Kwako  
Rusty Murine  
Bobby Secretary  
Prince Nippal  
Jimmy Muluk  
Ronald Muluk  
Thomas Gordon  
Harold Woodie  
John Crosbie  
Nipper Rankin & family  
Harry Singh  
Jackie Wally  
Vera Wally  
Rosie Edmunds  
+ Peter Dermoudy  
+ John Waters  
+ Billy Day  
+ (Honourary)  
All Dellesaville residents who apply.



Submission to Interim Aboriginal  
Land Rights Commissioner

My name is William Bartlett Day and I  
live at 39 Mc Minn Street, Darwin.

From discussions with Aborigines  
and old Territorians, I believe that  
transient tribal Aborigines have always  
camped near fresh water springs  
in the Frances Bay area.

Mr. Justice Woodward was persuaded  
by ~~the~~ the case presented for the  
Aborigines.

Before the cyclone, the campers used  
an area towards the Commonwealth  
Railways shunting yard. These huts  
were blown away and most of the  
Aborigines were evacuated.

The unofficial camp was serviced by  
one tap beside a sewerage instalation.  
This tap is now dry.

As the original campers returned  
to Darwin they were able to "squat" in  
an old classroom belonging to the Adult  
Education, behind Woolworths in Cavanagh  
Street. Not all the Aborigines camping  
in this building are involved with the  
Railway Dams Campsite, however.

After the long grass was cleared  
and a tent supplied, some of the original  
campers have returned to the Dam area.

The site will be too swampy in  
the wet season and will need to be  
built up at least six inches and  
properly drained.

In actual fact, given a choice, I  
am not sure that the people would  
select this campsite, attached as they



are to the area. They want this land, the full area shown as camping area on the map, but they would prefer to live higher up, I think.

An ~~architect~~ architect, Mr. Peter Dermoudy designed a village style layout for a camp for 20 to 30 people, maximum. It now appears that the appearance of this village, if ~~it~~<sup>they</sup> are allowed to live there, will be different but the basic principles will be the same. This is because of structural failure in the experimental house the Aborigines were making under Mr. Dermoudy's direction.

~~The idea of~~ This camp was to accommodate the Aborigines and at the same time provide employment by giving daily corroborees for tourists.

The people using this camp in pre-cyclone years were travelling back and forward to tourist centres across the harbour to perform professionally in tourist corroborees. They enjoyed this as a way of earning a living. Considering the demand, which the tourist bureau confirmed, they thought it a good idea to dance in Darwin, at the Railway Dam. In fact a few trial displays were done but it was a case of 'chicken before the egg' while the area around was not landscaped for the purpose.

So the Railway Dam camp will not be a general Aboriginal transient camp. It is not suitable for this and such camps only invite disorder.



73/9132

P.O. BOX 4751, 71  
DARWIN.  
15-1-75.

The Director,  
Dept. of Aboriginal Affairs,  
Darwin

Dear Sir, END OF YEAR REPORT ON RAKNURARA  
BOOTONG EXPERIMENTAL DWELLING

(Refer AA 73/9132)

The project is not yet finished for three reasons.

1. The unsatisfactory position of myself, having to fit the work in with other commitments.
2. The unsatisfactory position of the architect who is helping in a secondary way. It also became obvious that the architect had not thought out finer details and kept making alterations at inconvenient times. In fact he was more interested in the unusual construction materials, ~~sats~~ and the shape rather than the more practical question of how the pieces would fit together.
3. Interference by weather - cyclone Tracy.

At no time did the Aborigines lose interest in the project and made all the form work, segments and moulds. They were paid \$2 per hour and worked hard when the cement was poured, spreading and levelling in trying heat.

The segments were poured flat on the ground, to be lifted when hardened.

This involved laying out three shapes (a) the roof 20ft X 20ft square and (b) two triangular shapes 19ft base and 13ft sides, all 7" deep. These three shapes were poured in a morning, using the beer cans and wire as already described (see photos enc.)

After these forms were dry (2 weeks) the same shapes were poured again, on top of the first set, separated by plastic sheets.

The photographs were taken after the second

The Railway Dam camp will be ~~for~~ more of an Aboriginal business enterprise, providing accommodation at the same time.

At least this is the line of thought followed consistently by the Ralukurara Bostong Association Incorporated, of which I am secretary/treasurer since 5<sup>th</sup> June 1973.

The members have always emphasised to me that they do not want lots of other tribes joining them. I believe that if more land is not allocated for Aborigines, scattered throughout Darwin, then camps such as Railway Dam will be failures from the start.

W B Day



pour by ABM.

A crane was hired shortly before Christmas to lift the segments. However it proved impossible to get a sling between segments, lying flat one atop the other and in trying, some ~~to~~ minor damage was done to the corners of the roof section. A forklift was to be hired after the holiday break to allow blocks to be placed between the slabs, enough for a sling to get under the slabs.

And there the project rests, with enough money remaining to finish it when the time is opportune, perhaps in a months time.

However, judging by the architects lack of foresight, in this matter, I personally am not too confident of success, especially for the structure to be suitable for living purposes. We must put our faith in those better qualified and at least try to finish the job.

After hearing of the acceptance 'in principle' of the Gwalwa Daramiki Kalaluk Plans, as shown to Cabinet, the project becomes more important as the plan envisaged five small clusters of similar type of dwellings, so even if this building is a failure, no doubt we will have learnt from it.

Also our architect, Mr. Dermoudy. He has shown great personal interest and relates well to our members. ~~We~~ We should like to persist with him, if he is still around then.

ABM concrete has also shown a continuing interest and staff from ABM have assisted, even physically, in all pourings.

Yours faithfully,

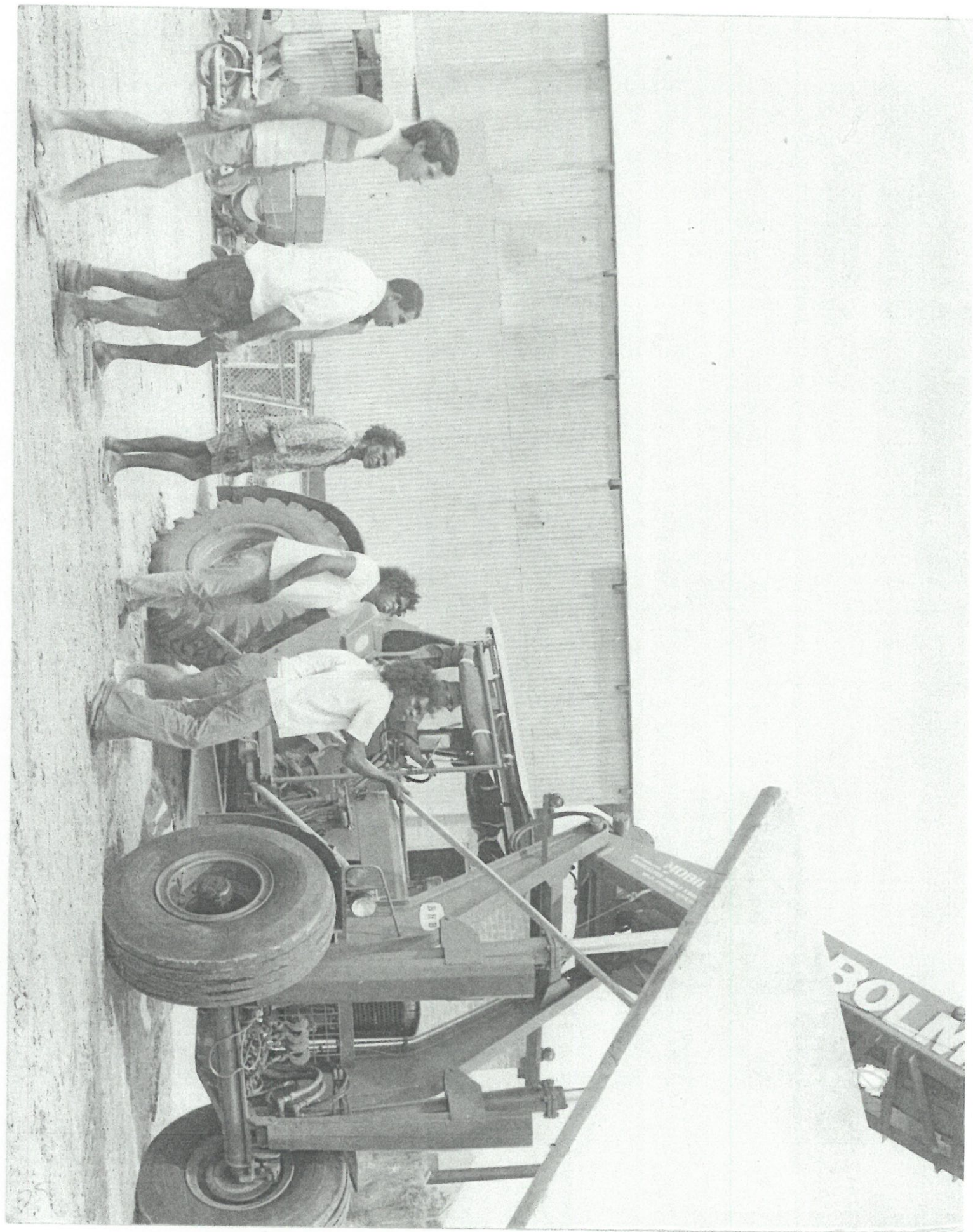
W B Day

for RAKNURAKA BOOTONG ASSOC.

Members anxiously watch while the panel is lifted by  
crane (cost of hire \$26).

2-1  
E. J. May, F. F. Fogarty,





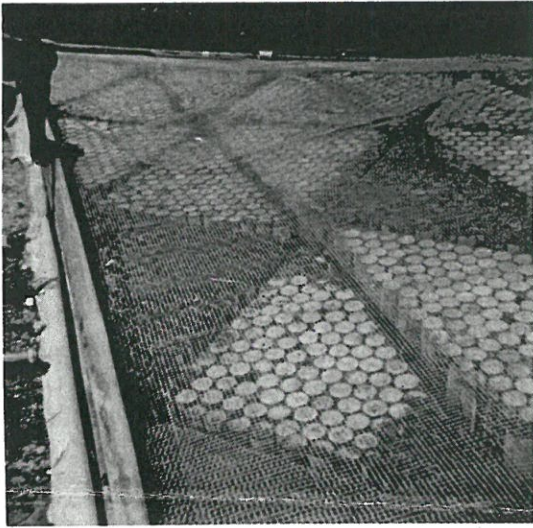


RAK NURARA  
AA 73/9132

BOOTONG ASSOCIATION

PHOTOGRAPHS of PROGRESS

REPORT - MODULAR DWELLING

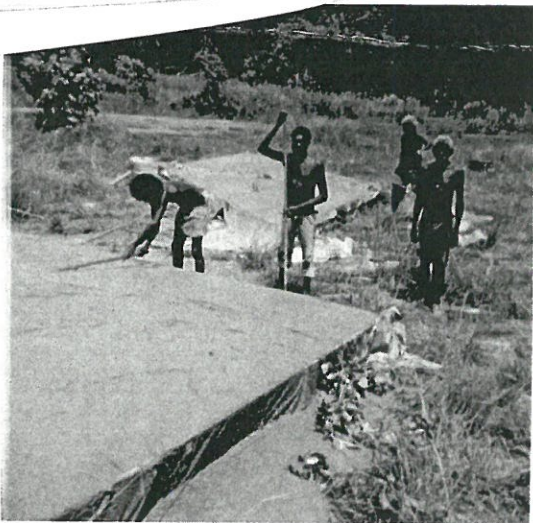


← The bales of ~~empty~~ <sup>empty</sup> cans which members have made are placed on top of two layers of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " welded fabric and  $\frac{3}{4}$ " of ready-foam cement.

3 layers of  $\frac{1}{2}$ " welded fabric (or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " wire netting) are then layed over all.

Photo shows roof section

Overall view of the site before top layer of readyfoam is added. →



← Members level the readyfoam cement

24.1.75 B. Leshman

Please prepare ack.  
in my signature (add a  
little bit of encouragement).

B



THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

MEMBER FOR STUART PARK

26th June, 1975

His Honour  
Mr Justice WARD  
Interim Aboriginal Land Commissioner  
Law Courts Building  
DARWIN N.T. 5790

Your Honour,

I wish to present my views to the Interim Commission on the Aboriginal Land Claim for a 2.43 ha area surrounding the railway dam in Stuart Park.

Having lived in Darwin for 30 years including a period at Winnellie Camp with Aborigines and having worked and schooled with Aborigines, I feel that my contact has given me some understanding of the problems involved in how our cultures relate. I fully support the principles advocated by the Country Liberal Party in the submission presented to the Interim Commission by Mr G. Tambling MLA.

It would appear that the claim for railway dam is based on its suitability as a camping site and the fact that it has been used as such for a number of years. No one else has demonstrated any interest in the area other than the Baptist Homes Trust who seem to have lost interest since their application for a lease was rejected.

The fact that the area is not historically significant to Aborigines is irrelevant to the claim where suitable unused crown land is involved.

The railway dam site, if granted under a special purpose lease to an Aboriginal trust, would provide a much needed facility with secure tenure. I believe the location is suitable and dependant on the Interim Commission's findings on the claim for Larrakeyah, may be the only campsite close to inner Darwin and the port facilities.

The conditions which should apply to a special purpose lease pose several problems.

1. The bushland setting usually preferred by Aborigines for campsites would pose a fire hazard which in this instance is close to fuel storage areas.

./..

2. The trustees to a lease would have to prove an ability and resources to develop and maintain basic facilities (e.g. toilets).
3. Considering the low number of Aboriginals who use the area, the claim is surprisingly large and it would be inappropriate to exclude the public from entering or crossing the lease.

I apologise for not appearing before the Interim Commission in person to expand my views. Assembly commitments and the lack of facilities and staff available to members prevent me from researching a comprehensive submission on the Aboriginal Land Claim for railway dam.

Yours faithfully,



M.B. PERRON

Member for Stuart Park