

Wave pools gazump housing

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"The people can now make improvements to their surroundings confident they have secure title to the area."

The rest is history, Dr Day says.

Dr Day says Mr Valadian has controlled the ADF since the early 1970s in various roles, now as the secretary.

"I imagine some time in the future, people will find it hard to believe that human beings lived in the structures you can see at the campsite," he says.

"People ask me 'What is your vision for One Mile Dam in the future?'"

"For a start, I don't think the people should be moved just because the land is now required to suit developers."

He says increasingly the little community is a symbol of several issues confronting the Northern Territory and quotes Justice Woodward: "It illustrates the way in which Aboriginal interests can be lost sight of when other requirements become pressing."

"... the community in its present



location will increasingly become a defiant symbol of the rush to develop Darwin, regardless of the town's heritage and prior occupation by Aboriginal people," Dr Day says.

"Second, the obvious neglect visible

in the community contrasts glaringly with the flashy wharf precinct around the corner, and seems to confirm accusations that Commonwealth GST grants disproportionately allocated to the NT to correct indigenous disadvantage have been siphoned off into prestigious vote-winning projects like the Convention Centre, wave pools and the like.

"I don't think it is too extreme to accuse the NT Government of criminal neglect as the Central Land Council has said in recent times, and One Mile Dam is the living embodiment of that accusation.

"And now we have projects like the gas plant at Blaydin Point starting up that promise so much, One Mile Dam will serve as a barometer of the success of the promise to close the gap between indigenous people and the general Territory public."

He suggests a trust could be established to hold the lease with representatives from the Larrakia Nation, the Belyuen community and the wider community. "Whatever happens at One Mile Dam, Aboriginal land rights remain the issue, more than housing," he says.

Mr Tidswell says there is extremely high housing need with extremely low investment.

"There is a huge need for affordable housing in Darwin for indigenous

people," he says. "And I stress the need for affordable housing, not so much as on town camps but better-quality housing.

"I think the one thing that has got to be asked about One Mile Dam to the leaseholder and the Government is what they want to see. Is it transient? Is it permanent?"

"There has been talk for some time of a transient camp in Darwin, basically a visitors village. I'm not sure One Mile Dam would be the perfect location for that.

"You have a quite funny situation of three-quarters-of-a-million dollar flats overlooking One Mile Dam."

Mr Timber's plea is also for more than housing and a right to land and self-determination.

"People like Dave Tollner and all those politicians, would they say things like that if they were in the same position as me?" he says.

"You know, as us here. They'll start bringing out these words like dignity and bloody human rights, and all that sort of thing. What about us? I could say that sort of thing. What are they going to say?"

"We've been asking since I've been here anyway for better housing, (so that) everyone can live in comfort and all of that. That's what government's all about. They're supposed to look after their citizens."

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