

## **Statement by the local people of Knuckeys Lagoon Community.**

In the 1960s our families lived in corrugated iron humpies on vacant land in the bush around Berrimah. In the 1970s we helped Bobby Secretary and the Larrakia people to claim land in town. In those days the old Larrakia people agreed we could have some land where we had our camps so we could build a secure future for our people who had come to live in Darwin.

After 8 years of struggle, in 1979 we were granted this block at Knuckeys Lagoon. The lease for our land was given to the Aboriginal Development Foundation (ADF) on our behalf. We have now lived at Knuckeys Lagoon for four and five generations. Since the land was granted, many of the people who made the original land claim have died and are buried on the Knuckeys Lagoon lease.

We call ourselves 'the local people' and we live in the first row of houses near the entrance to the community. You can read some of our story in Bill Day's book, "Bunji: a story of the Gwalwa Daraniki Movement" and in Basil Sansom's book, "Fringe dwellers in Darwin: The Camp at Wallaby Cross."

Bernie Valadian has been the President of the ADF for more than thirty-five years. At first the ADF helped us build our housing, from tin huts to brick homes. However, our homes are now urgently in need of renovations, fencing and road works and for many years we have had little involvement in the administration of the community. For example, the ADF do not consult us anymore and they did not ask us about appointing Ronnie Agnew as 'Community Leader' of Knuckeys Lagoon.

Since Ronnie Agnew moved onto the lease we have suffered from violent harassment by members of his family. We have made complaints to the police, but nothing has changed.

We, the local people of Knuckeys Lagoon, want to have the power to control the future of our community. We want to vote for our own Community Council and to appoint a paid administrator from outside the community.