

regretted having to 'accentuate the negatives' but hoped that his 'ideas will help you avoid embarrassment over the ill-conceived plans of your department' (Day 1983).

Internal disputes within the Gwalwa Daraniki Association over the transient camp issue and other differences in opinion about management of the Kulaluk lease culminated in Day's resignation from the position of Secretary in March 1983. It was subsequently reported that 'Aborigines had taken the initiative to provide town camps for rural visitors' and that it had been 'unanimously agreed that the land 'should be shared with those who had nowhere to go when they came to town' (*NT News*, 19 March 1983). Day continued to criticise the proposal and Baugh, Gwalwa Daraniki President, informed the media that Day was speaking against the wishes of Kulaluk residents and leaders. Baugh stressed that the transient camp facility was needed 'and we will go ahead and put them in whatever happens' (*The Advertiser*, 7 April 1983 in Cooper 1985b).

A new hitch emerged on the transient camp proposal when a petition with one hundred and sixty-six signatures from the residents of Ludmilla was presented by the Member for Ludmilla, Roger Steele, to the Northern Territory Parliament. The petition stated:

To The honourable Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, we the undersigned citizens of Darwin respectfully showeth: (1) that the Gwalwa Daraniki Association proposes to establish a transients camp on the site of the old Ludmilla tip; (2) this action to place what can only become a ghetto or a slum adjacent to residential areas of Darwin is to be condemned and a site west of Dick Ward Drive will create a dangerous traffic hazard. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly will heed our strong objections to this short-sighted proposal to impose a transients camp on the residents of Ludmilla, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray (1 September 1983, *Northern Territory Parliamentary Record* 13-15, May-October 1983).

In reply to a question from Opposition leader, Bob Collins, about the 'government's current position ... on the proposed transient camp at Kulaluk' the Minister for Community Development replied that he did not 'have any fancy one way or the other for any development at Kulaluk'. He was 'happy to see things progress to the satisfaction of the people but it is extremely difficult for the Government to help when the people cannot agree amongst themselves' (1 September 1983, Questions Without Notice, *Northern Territory Parliamentary Record* 13-15, May-October 1983).

By late 1983 a decision on the camp issue had not been reached although an open day at Kulaluk displayed plans for the whole lease and placed the transient camps on the western side of Dick Ward Drive. A sporting complex and tropical nature park were planned for the area of the lease on which the Government wanted to place the transient camps (Cooper 1985a:22). Cooper, writing in 1985, believes that the 'outstanding lack of determination by government authorities to commit themselves to any firm proposal' over the camp issue revealed the 'perceived nature of the issue as a political hot potato' (Cooper 1985a:22-23). It was not until February 1986 that a housing project called Minmarama Park was designed by the Financial Advisory Consulting and Training Services (FACTS) and submitted to the Northern Territory Planning Authority for approval (*NT News*, 10 January 1986:2). In 1989 Minmarama Park was finally built on the site proposed by the Gwalwa Daraniki Association. The development was originally funded by the Aboriginal Development Corporation, with some assistance from the Northern Territory Government in the form of lands servicing<sup>4</sup>. It was determined that the maximum period people could stay at Minmarama was for three months but although

---

<sup>4</sup> Further funding for this development came from the Town Camp Housing and Infrastructure Program. The TCHIP was a program of \$30M jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Territory Governments to improve living conditions in town camps at Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs, Elliot and Borroloola.



the houses were specifically designed as transient accommodation they quickly became used as permanent accommodation. Occupants are currently long term Aboriginal residents or frequent visitors to Darwin. Minmarama Park comprises ten one bedroom houses with communal ablution blocks and ten two bedroom houses with showers and toilets. The Gwalwa Daraniki Association administers Minmarama under a formal tenancy agreement and tenants pay rent directly to the Gwalwa Daraniki Association<sup>5</sup>. The tenants pay for their own electricity and there is a lengthy waiting list for accommodation at Minmarama Park (Northern Territory of Australia nd).

### *Bill Day Leaves Kulaluk*

Bill Day's refusal to support the transient camp proposal together with his opposition over the construction of the mosquito drains and the excessive nature of some of his protest actions resulted in Day again being formally requested to 'remove yourself and your personal property from the Special Purpose Lease within seven days of the date of this letter ... As you are no doubt aware the Association can use whatever force may be necessary to remove you peaceably from the property. It is anxious to avoid any unpleasantness and would prefer to have your co-operation' (McQueen 1984). Although successfully fighting this eviction notice Day soon recognised that it was time for him to leave Kulaluk. He had lost the support of members of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association through the closely timed deaths of Bobby Secretary and Fred Fogarty and his conservation values and methods of protest were at wide variance to the way in which the rising Kulaluk management saw the development of Kulaluk. Day, embittered by the Kulaluk management's senseless destruction of Fogarty's house after his death, chose to demolish everything he had built at Kulaluk<sup>6</sup>. Frustrated and saddened after many years of service to the Gwalwa Daraniki Association, Day issued a final note to the *Bunji* subscribers:

Loyal readers, subscribers, correspondents and donors throughout the world will be disappointed, whilst understanding that, since the first edition in August 1971, times have drastically changed. Today Aborigines are expressing their views in the many associations that have exploded throughout the continent.

A newsletter edited by a white man is out of place. Particularly in the coming years which will be a period of sorting-out, self criticism and reappraisal. I am confident the Black movement will then surge forward to take its rightful place in the world scene.

Although the feedback from Aboriginal readers in 1983 convince me that there is a greater need than ever for an outspoken free press in the BUNJI style, I personally have had enough. For twelve and a half years I have been the one-man editor, writer, publisher and book-keeper, relying on your generous financial support...

The GWALWA DARANIKI ASSOCIATION INC, via its secretary/manager, Richard Baugh, persists in court action to have me evicted from the Kulaluk lease ... I am particularly concerned that these people have amended the Association's Constitution so that elections will only be held every four years<sup>7</sup> ... Legal advice is

---

<sup>5</sup> Rent is about \$100 per week for the one bedroom houses and \$125 per week for the two bedroom houses.

<sup>6</sup> Today all that remains of the house which Fred Fogarty built at the Southern end of the lease is broken down foundations (see photograph 26). While many people use this part of the lease to get to the Ludmilla Creek, this part of the lease has suffered from years of abuse and continues to have rubbish dumped on it while trail bikers think it's an excellent playground.

<sup>7</sup> By 1985 the constitutional objectives of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association were listed as:

- (a) -- To hold Title and administer such land for and on behalf of the members of the Association.
- (b) To erect or purchase dwelling houses and other community facilities for the members of the Association;
- (c) To undertake and implement activities which further the economic and social development of Aborigines and which are conducive to the advancement of Aborigines in general and 'the community' in particular;



that this trick cannot stop a free election at the next AGM, neither can membership be restricted as was done last year. Therefore I urge all of you to attend the association's AGM which must be held this JULY ... My involvement in Aboriginal affairs will continue until Aborigines take their rightful place in Australian society.

Let us fight to ensure there are no cut-backs in the federal budget this year which could retard the upgrading of the still shameful conditions in which most Black Australians live and die (Memo 14 May 1984 in Cooper 1985b)<sup>8</sup>.

Day received many letters of support for his services at Kulaluk and Henderson recounted a conversation with a 'very senior official' in Darwin who believed that 'in ten years there won't be a Kulaluk, and the exit of Bill Day would hasten the process' (in Cooper 1985b).

### *Kulaluk Today*

Day left a vastly changed Kulaluk to the one he had first visited nearly fifteen years before. The main Kulaluk community comprising eighty or so people had grown up around Bobby Secretary's camp at the Progress Drive end of the lease and in 1984 consisted of two one bedroom brick houses, four one bedroom demountables, one tin shed, one tarpaulin shelter, one double decker bus, one small caravan, and three other caravans. A further forty-five people were living under trees and it was reported that all the accommodation except the one bedroom brick dwelling needed replacing (in Cooper 1985b). However, the Gwalwa Daraniki Association experienced considerable trouble over negotiations to improve the accommodation facilities available at Kulaluk and could not find a suitable negotiating partner. Cooper believes that it was the small size of the Kulaluk population which had previously been used as a 'rationale' for its low priority status in relation to funding through the Aboriginal Development Commission (Cooper 1985a:23). According to Cooper the lack of adequate funding and support has ensured that the greater portion of the lease remains unused and vulnerable to continuing environmental degradation from the effects of uncontrolled fires<sup>9</sup> and weed

- 
- (d) To foster the preservation and development of traditional and other cultural and recreational activities;
  - (e) To act as a liaison between the residents of 'the community' and the Northern Territory Government and other outside agencies;
  - (f) To foster better understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people;
  - (g) To apply for, receive, and administer any grant or loan made to the Association under any State or Federal Legislation or for individual or private organisations.
  - (h) To invest property and monies of the Association not immediately required, in such manner as may from time to time be determined;
  - (i) To acquire any property such as lands, buildings, equipment or other by any lawful means, and to sell or otherwise dispose of any property of the Association.

<sup>8</sup> Day also wrote to Daryl Manzie, Minister for Community Development, regarding an investigation into the Kulaluk Special Purpose Lease. Manzie replied, 'I would agree with you that the Darwin Aboriginal Community and the city itself could benefit from judicious planning and development of the lease. However, whilst there remains disagreement between various interested bodies over development goals the aspirations of all parties will remain frustrated' (Manzie 1984).

On leaving Darwin, Day deposited all the material and correspondence he had collected during his time with the Gwalwa Daraniki Association and at Kulaluk in the Northern Territory Archives and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

<sup>9</sup> In the NT the dry season provides perfect conditions for the spread of uncontrolled fires. According to Cooper's report Kulaluk has been burnt out almost annually which kills young trees and allows for the establishment of fire prone grassland (Cooper 1985a:14). The absence of firebreaks hastens the spread of fires and makes it difficult to get to the fire once it's begun. Bill Day and Fred Fogarty were both instrumental in applying a more traditional approach in burning small sections of land in the late wet season when moisture conditions produce a controllable mosaic burn (Cooper 1985a:14). In addition, adjacent land holders have expressed alarm at the dangers posed to their properties. Cooper reports that at one stage areas of land were bulldozed but no fire-break system eventuated. Fire continues to pose a significant hazard to Kulaluk during the dry season.



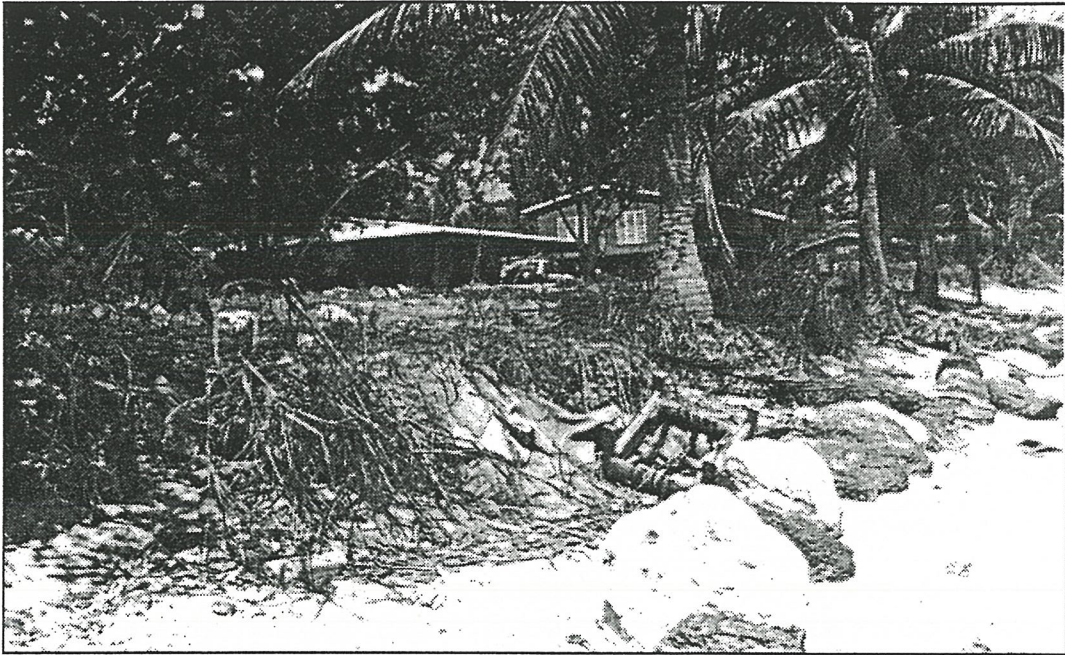


Photograph Twenty-three: The Kulaluk community access road off Dick Ward Drive with an open drain lying along side of it and the Sunset Cove development to its right



Photograph Twenty-four: The Kulaluk community, 1995



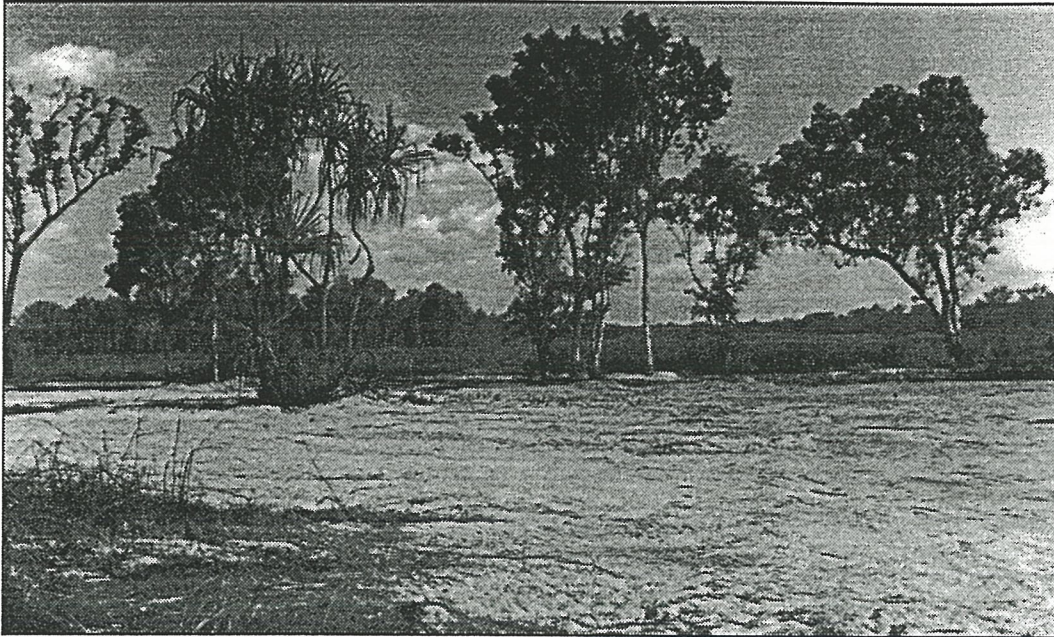


Photograph Twenty-five: The Kulaluk community, 1995



Photograph Twenty-six: The Kulaluk float in the 1995 Bougainvillea Festival Grand Parade





Photograph Twenty-seven: A section of the Kulaluk lease lying between Dick Ward Drive and the coast



Photograph Twenty-eight: The beginnings of the sunset Cove development  
Note the Kulaluk demountables towards the middle rear of the photograph





Photograph Twenty-nine: Topsy Secretary, Mitbul (Prince of Wales)  
and Johnny McMahon (L to R) on the beach at Kulaluk



encroachment. This, together with the land degradation caused by the digging of drains, the removal of sand and the illegal dumping of rubbish on the Kulaluk lease, has led the wider community to see the Kulaluk lease as land which is going to waste and Cooper suggests that an 'expectation lingers that European conceptions of land-use will prevail in urban areas and that traditionally -based Aboriginal usage is not legitimate in an urban context' (Cooper 1985a:23).

The Gwalwa Daraniki Association continues to manage the Kulaluk lease which has recently changed from a Special Purpose Lease to a Crown Lease in Perpetuity. Many of the original members of the Association have now passed away and some have moved on, however there remains a core group of people who have lived at Kulaluk for much, if not all, of their lives. Management positions within the Gwalwa Daraniki have continually been held by the Larrakia or closely related family members residing on the Kulaluk lease<sup>10</sup>. At one stage the broader Larrakia community endeavoured to become involved with the Gwalwa Daraniki Association but political infighting at that time resulted in them not being successful. From this time the broader Larrakia community have organised politically in the Larrakia Association and have had little to do with the Gwalwa Daraniki Association preferring to concentrate their energies on the Kenbi Land Claim and other issues outside of Kulaluk. However, many Larrakia people not resident at Kulaluk continue to visit friends and family there and believe that Larrakia elder, Topsy Secretary, is looking after Kulaluk (Barnes 1989:1024).

Responsibility for the management of the Kulaluk lease is a full-on, full-time job. A 1984 Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority Report alleged that the Kulaluk management was not in a position to 'control all unwanted or illegal activities' on the lease. These activities included the dumping of domestic rubbish as well as car bodies; the entry and movement of vehicles and trail bikes; illegal crab potting and drag netting; the lighting of fires; and the activities of neighbours encroaching on the Kulaluk lease. Although some of these activities were not perceived as a problem or 'undesirable', the Association believed that they would cause environmental degradation and arose from the lack of a management plan for various sections of the lease (Deveson 1983). Despite obstacles facing the effective management of the Kulaluk lease 'the lease possesses areas of natural beauty with the potential to be maintained as a recreational resource in their own right' (Deveson 1983:14). To preserve these areas as well as to institute culturally appropriate management of the area the report recommended several measures such as the development of an overall management plan for the individual sections of the lease to involve residents of Kulaluk and Bagot; the appointment of a part-time ranger to control illegal or unwanted activities on the lease; the construction of firebreaks and access tracks to facilitate the control of fires; and the carrying out of environmental impact statements for work conducted by the Darwin City Council on the lease. This report further suggested a consideration of the possible inclusion of the unused areas of land recommended by Ward into the Kulaluk Special Purpose Lease (Deveson 1983:16-17).

Bill Day leaving Kulaluk signified the end of the Kulaluk story as it appeared in the media. While the kind of protest enacted by Day on the lease has not been repeated the Kulaluk community have endeavoured to maintain the integrity of their lease. Trespassers are challenged and asked to leave and anyone wanting to enter the lease must get permission from the Gwalwa Daraniki Association. Housing and other infrastructure development continues to take place and there are currently nine houses and two demountables used as accommodation for approximately one hundred people at Kulaluk. The first elevated house was erected at Kulaluk last year and funding has recently been provided for the construction of some single men and single women's houses<sup>11</sup>. Rent

---

<sup>10</sup> At the 15 August 1995 AGM of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association, Daphne Talbot was elected to the position of President and Helen Secretary became Vice-President.

<sup>11</sup> In 1995 the Northern Territory Government began the processes of formulating an urban housing strategy for Aboriginal people as it was recognised that the Government had formerly concentrated on



for the houses is paid on a weekly basis to the Gwalwa Daraniki Association and each house is individually metered for electricity for which the tenants are responsible for paying. The Gwalwa Daraniki Association has recently been experiencing administrative difficulties and owes a substantial amount in unpaid rates and water bills and the Local Government Division is currently working with the Association to overcome these problems. A Special Purpose Grant has been provided to employ a book keeper who was to 'set up suitable systems and provide training for Association staff' (Northern Territory of Australia nd:45-48). As well as managing Minmarama Park the Gwalwa Daraniki Association also holds the title and responsibility for Juninga Old People's Home<sup>12</sup>. Rent from these two institutions together with recent economic developments on the lease should provide the Gwalwa Daraniki Association with a sound economic base.

In August 1993 the *Northern Territory News* included an article about a 'big theme park planned for Darwin' by a Darwin based company, Vysrose Pty Ltd. The proposal was for land cited in the paper as 'vacant Aboriginal land' and would include a motel-restaurant, holiday apartments, a nine-hole par three golf course - including a driving range - a go-kart track and a water-theme recreation park. This water-theme park was to have water slides, lakes, cable water-skiing and white-water rafting. Venues for activities such as indoor cricket, volleyball, badminton, basketball and netball would be provided. The Managing Director of Vysrose, David Smith, told the paper that the proposal had the support of the Gwalwa Daraniki Association and that the agreement between the groups contained provisions for Aboriginal employment. Furthermore, 'revenue generated from the lease agreements will have a significant, positive influence towards the Kulaluk community's aspirations for self-determination' and the 'open, natural character of the area' was to be maintained by extensive landscaping (*NT News*, 2 August 1993). In December 1993 Lands Minister Steve Hatton gave approval for the construction of the McDonald's restaurant as part of the broader Vysrose proposal (3 December 1993:3). A later newspaper article claims that Vysrose signed a 99 year lease with the Gwalwa Daraniki Association for the land but showed that opposition was emerging from the RAAF and FAC who believed that the development's close proximity to the airport 'might cause or worsen an air disaster'. An application to rezone this area of land was sent to the Northern Territory Planning Authority and unofficial reports indicate that this application has not been successful<sup>13</sup>.

Apart from the development of the community infrastructure at Kulaluk and the subleasing of certain sections of land people have continued to use the lease in many and varied ways. A major study of Aboriginal land use at Kulaluk was conducted by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority during the early 1980s with its objective being to 'establish the importance of the area to Aboriginal residents and visitors in the area'. Fear that an expanding Darwin inner city would encroach on areas previously considered unsuitable for urban development helped inspire such inquiry. The study recorded

---

housing needs in remote Aboriginal communities and the already established town camps, hostels and public housing were no longer adequate (Australia 1995:1).

<sup>12</sup> In Department of Lands, Housing and Local Government 'speak', Kulaluk, Minmarama Park and Juninga Old Peoples Home are all located on Crown Lease No 671. The Kulaluk Crown Lease in Perpetuity is zoned either O1 (Open Space) which occupies the coastal fringe or R6 (Community Living). The Kulaluk community is located on land zoned O1 (Open Space) and is within the storm surge zone as well as being under the flight path (Northern Territory of Australia nd:45-48). Large areas within zone R6 are reported to be 'either mangrove swamp' or 'seasonally inundated land, vine thickets which are ecologically unique, or directly under the flight path for the Darwin airport'. Other areas suitable for housing within the lease have previously been used for dumping and burying of debris especially after Cyclone Tracy.

<sup>13</sup> A group initiated by Vysrose called the Kulaluk Community Action Group is currently meeting with environment groups and other parties in a bid to pressure the NT Government to approve the rezoning and consider moving the airport so that developments such as theirs could proceed. Vysrose is also planning to conduct a feasibility study into an eco-tourist proposal for the coastal section of the Kulaluk lease.



activities conducted on the lease and in adjacent waters over one month during the dry season and found that Aboriginal people from Kulaluk and Bagot were the most diverse and consistent users of the Ludmilla Creek system. Aborigines from other areas also visited Kulaluk to either obtain 'salt water food' or to share bush tucker no longer available on Kulaluk with family and friends living there. For some, fishing and hunting on the Kulaluk lease was a reassertion of traditional culture while for others it was the means by which people supplemented their diets. The coastal areas at Kulaluk have also provided quiet and isolated camping areas for Aborigines who need to be away from their more permanent living areas for any number of reasons. Although bandicoot, wallaby, goanna and frill-necked lizards continued to be caught the study found that users of the lease were concerned about the decline in bush tucker available on the lease in recent years because of overuse. The study concluded that the lease needed to be recognised as a 'valuable and regularly used recreational, nutritional and educational resource' and that any future town planning should take on the impact that this would have on Aboriginal use of the lease and should be a 'primary consideration in any future plans for the Kulaluk lease and surrounding land' (Deveson 1983).

In recent observations made for this report residents of Kulaluk have continued to access the lease for bush tucker on a regular basis. Nets and fishing lines are constantly being repaired as they are used to ensure that the Kulaluk community has an adequate supply of fish. Visitors to Kulaluk, who are friends or relatives or others who come to pay their respects to Prince of Wales and Topsy Secretary as senior traditional owners of the country, often bring foods which are no longer available on Kulaluk. Eggs, magpie geese, turtle and large mud crab are often given to Kulaluk residents. The mangroves in front of Kulaluk continue to provide excellent hunting grounds and during the dry season it is not unusual for some of the permanent residents of Kulaluk to escape from the increased population at Kulaluk by camping elsewhere on the Kulaluk lease away from the main community. A camping place often used is referred to as 'Bill Day camp', 'Bagot beach' or 'Herman Crossing'. Although Day demolished his camp on leaving, the area has retained some of his impact such as the planting of tamarind trees which now provide good shady camping areas for the Kulaluk people. During the school holidays the children from the main Kulaluk community are taken onto the lease to camp and catch bush tucker. Long bum, fish, mangrove worm, yams, periwinkles and crabs are all collected from this area although food from the sea is not as abundant as it once was. The settlement of a particular area results in the severe overuse and depletion of bush tucker in the area and it has been important for people at Kulaluk to have access to reliable vehicles so they can travel to good hunting and fishing grounds outside of Darwin, for example at Gunn Point.

---

*I like it [long bum] two days and cook it, it's salty ... but if you cook it straight away it's not really salty. See you got to peel that green stuff away. You eat with that its non stop going to the toilet [laughing] ... [long bum in the mangroves here?] Yeah but here only small ... over that way little bit bigger. But we still like eating them you know, to clean out tummy ... mangrove worm, clean your chest. Chop the tree you know, split it and then just draw it out that long thing and put it on the bucket ... you just eat it straight away, good one. But some you got little spot, white one, got to boil it, its itchy might make you cough cough cough. And you boil it, you drink the soup. Ohh lovely soup [do the kids around here eat it?] Ohh even the baby like it ... it good for them you know ... Crab, fish, long bums, periwinkles we eat all sorts of things from sea... (pers. comm. Topsy Secretary 1995).*

---

Sites of special significance continue to be protected on the lease itself. The recent Sunset Cove development on the block beside Kulaluk has renewed interest in the activities of the snake who created the freshwater springs on Kulaluk. This site was reportedly damaged in 1983 when the access road to Kulaluk was sealed (Walsh 1989:10) and recently the company developing the Sunset Cove housing estate have been



experiencing difficulties in stabilising the land to be developed because of constant water seepage. Topsy Secretary believes that the recent building of 'Sunset Cove' has also interfered with a special stone which determines relationships between people and has resulted in fighting within the Kulaluk community. The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority was alerted to the impact of the developers on these sites and an agreement has been reached between the Gwalwa Daraniki Association and the developers to protect these sites. A banyan tree practically devastated by a fire continues to grow and hold special meaning for the Kulaluk people. The establishment of a burial ground on the Kulaluk lease where several people over the last ten years have been buried following Larrakia ceremony is constantly monitored and looked after by the community. The cemetery is hidden amongst overgrown forest and is marked by a sign bearing the Aboriginal flag and a notice that the area is a burial ground and trespassers should keep out. Other events witnessed at Kulaluk such as the sharing of food, the elaborate formation of groups during card games and an awareness and concern for what is happening to people, land and sites outside of Kulaluk all indicate that Kulaluk is very much Aboriginal land with Aboriginal people living on it in a distinct way in an urban environment.

Aboriginal land interests have to some extent been satisfied in Darwin with the granting of Special Purpose Leases to Aboriginal groups. Whether the same could be said for the recognition of Aboriginal sites of significance in Darwin is another matter. The following chapter looks at some sites of significance to the Larrakia in the Darwin area and considers the way in which Aboriginal heritage is perceived in Darwin.