

Objection to Subdivision of Lot 5182

January 17, 2014

The Manager
Development Assessment Services
Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
GPO Box 1680
Darwin NT 0801

Dear Sir

Re: Objection to Subdivision of Lot 5182

According to public notices in the Northern Territory News, January 17, 2014, an application has been made to subdivide Lot 5182 into 6 blocks. This application follows the successful application last year by Jape and the Gwalwa Daraniki Association to rezone Lot 5182 to Light Industry. Amongst many other interested people, I lodged an objection to that rezoning. My objections still stand and are applicable to the recent application to subdivide. Please refer to the points listed in my previous objection.

In regard to the advertised intention to subdivide Lot 5182, I make the following objections:

- Firstly, the land is in the flight path of the Darwin International Airport and RAAF Base. Previously the RAAF has objected to development in the flight path and more recently the RAAF has advised Ludmilla and Narrows residents that the noise levels are going to increase substantially with the introduction of new jets. Obviously, the dangers of building in the flight path would also increase with more military flights. For example, in 1985 I witnessed the ditching of a Mirage jet on the mudflats of the bay in the self-same flight path.
- The area was originally returned to Aboriginal people in compensation for the loss of land from the old Bagot Reserve, which extended to Totem Road until 1965 and includes many unrecorded sites of cultural and historical significance.
- The area was also granted to Larrakia people as the traditional owners of the Darwin area. To facilitate the grant, a defunct association, the Gwalwa Daraniki Association, was revived to hold the lease. This was in spite of the original intention being for an Aboriginal land trust to be the lease holder. A Trust would follow the regulations of the Land Rights Act 1976, which requires consultation with all interested groups. To intentionally avoid any consultation process, in 2006 the Gwalwa Daraniki Association constitution was amended to restrict membership to "no less than 5" of whom at least half must be Aboriginal people who are required to have lived in the Kulaluk community for 12 months and belong to the Danggalaba Clan. Membership is also open to their spouses, who may be non-Aboriginal. In short, the Gwalwa Daraniki Association is not representative. Although this situation may suit the developers and government, in my opinion it is highly unsatisfactory, if not corrupt.

As an anthropologist, I also note that there is no unanimous agreement on the composition of the “Daggalaba Clan”.

- The area was set aside as a conservation zone. I was involved in sketching the original plans to satisfy the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. The plans to use the area as a conservation zone led to approval by that Commission in 1975. Even in 1979, when the land was granted as a Special Purpose Lease, there was no anticipation that the lease would be developed for non-Aboriginal use, for the reasons given (flightpath and significance to Aboriginal people and Larrakia), and because the area was low-lying and flood prone (and remains so).
- Viable plans still exist to landscape the Kulaluk lease as a wilderness, cultural, education and heritage park employing Aboriginal rangers, guides and teachers, open to the public and school groups, as well as providing areas for cultural activities. In 2013 a successful river cruise was held up the Ludmilla Creek at high tide, giving some idea of the possibilities of a Green Belt stretching from East Point, through Ludmilla Creek, Lot 5182 and the Airport to Rapid Creek and beyond to Holmes Jungle and Lee Point. Subdividing Lot 5182 for Light Industry would not be compatible with these plans.
- A system of roads created by the subdivision will create hazards for daily commuters using Dickward Drive and Bagot Road. I believe that the public has not been made aware of the traffic disruption that new roads and traffic control measures will cause. More time is needed to raise public awareness of the effects of the subdivision.
- The advertisement mentions that the closing date for objections is January 31st. Two weeks is not enough time for busy people to make a submission. Indeed the constant submission of proposals to develop Lot 5182 has become “a war of attrition” to wear down opposition groups and interested people like myself with limited resources, in comparison with the resources of planners and developers like Planit, Jape and others.
- The developers have been given an unfair advantage because they have not had to pay market value for the land, in comparison, for example, with a development in Winnellie or other industrial areas. In turn, the leaseholders have been granted the land at peppercorn rent as a community area, never intended as a commercial subdivision.
- The area is in a drainage zone, with vast amounts of runoff flowing through after heavy rain. An industrial zone will inevitably cause runoff and pollution into the drainage system.
- Ludmilla residents and others are fully supportive of preserving Lot 5182 as a conservation zone, and in other areas have actively become in conservation as witnessed by the Ludmilla

Land Care Group and various verge public meetings in Fitzer Drive. They are totally opposed to a light industrial area and new subdivision on Lot 5182.

- Evidence has been given by Dave Tollner and others that Lot 5182 is littered with rubbish and old car bodies. Apart for being a gross exaggeration, rubbish dumping which has occurred under the Gwalwa Daraniki Association can relatively easily be cleaned up. The area of the planned subdivision can also very easily and cheaply be converted to community use under supervision of an Aboriginal Trust, by clearing a network of narrow cycle and walking tracks weaving between the vegetation which could also act as fire breaks.
- Consultation has not been held with Bagot residents, many of whom are also Larrakia claimants, and all of whom have a cultural and historical connection to the land to be subdivided. I believe that few Bagot residents are aware that the land is about to be alienated from Aboriginal use for all time. Although the very limited number of leaseholders may be able to sit back and receive rental payments, as far as can be envisioned no other Aboriginal people will benefit from the subdivision.
- Although developers like Planit and Jape may claim that industrial sheds will benefit the Gwalwa Daraniki members through rental payments, others state that the land is priceless as open space in the heart of Darwin and that the use of the area for light industry is unimaginative, wasteful, visually ugly, polluting, and will be of little benefit to most Aboriginal people, whereas parklands, maintenance of cultural areas, education areas and a wilderness area will be a continuing source of employment and racial reconciliation as well as have psychological benefits towards the mental health of Aboriginal people.
- The area of the proposed subdivision is in a cyclone surge zone. Scenes on television news from the devastated zones of the Philippines should be a warning of developing in a surge zone.

Please accept the above as my objection to the advertised subdivision of Lot 5182 between Bagot Road, Totem Road, Dickward Drive and Fitzer Drive, better known as the Kulaluk Lease. I have many videos on Youtube which support the above points. They can be viewed under the username, kulaluk1971, or search on Youtube for "Save the Darwin Green Belt". There are also supporting arguments on my website, www.drbilldayanthropologist.com

Yours sincerely

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