

# ***ALICE SPRINGS NEWS,***

***July 23, 2003.***

## **BUSH BLOCK BATTLE ON THE EASTSIDE. Report by KIERAN FINNANE.**

An "exclusive residential development with panoramic views of the surrounding landscape" Ð or traffic, noise, erosion, weeds, over-flowing septic tanks in a big rain?

Old Eastside residents are at logger-heads with developer Samih Habib over the future of land he owns at 33 Cavanagh Crescent, at the top of what is affectionately known as "Snob Hill".

The 22,000 sqm lot is uniquely large within the town boundary and, sitting on a ridge, and is bordered on three sides by national park. In the recent past it was the base of a trail-riding operation.

Cavanagh Crescent itself is one of Alice's most prestigious addresses, enjoyed by only seven other properties.

Mr Habib, local businessman and alderman, is overseas and could not be contacted for comment.

He is applying for re-zoning of his land from its current "rural living" zoning (RL2) to "specific use" (SU).

His application requests permission to subdivide into 11 lots, which could then be used for a variety of purposes: bed and breakfast; home occupation, (running a business from home); single dwelling; or multiple dwelling.

Each use would require the further approval of the Development Consent Authority.

The developers are happy to accept conditions, including a building height limit of one storey and confinement of buildings to defined development envelopes.

However, the go-ahead for such a proposal would open up a Pandora's box of negative and potentially negative impacts, according to the Eastside Residents' Association (ERA).

ERA is a well-organised lobby group, active on issues in the area since 1994.

Their previous membership register listed over 300 households. A renewed membership drive had, as of June 20, 181 people signed up, with less than one third of households approached, according to president Geoff Miers.

With the auction of 33 Cavanagh Crescent imminent late last year, ERA took the trouble of alerting potential buyers to the association's concerns about development on the site.

They placed advertisements in both local papers, listing their opposition to hilltop development in general, as well as to rezoning of the 33 Cavanagh Crescent site and any increase of housing density there.

The advertisement also stated ERA's concern about the impact of any such development on the amenity of local residents and on the biodiversity of surrounding ecosystems, as well as ERA's desire to preserve the unique environment provided by Spencer Valley.

In their submission objecting to the application, ERA Ð through Mr Miers, public officer, lawyer Max Biesse, and treasurer, Craig Cross Ð go to great pains to establish the validity of their crucial concern about loss of amenity (the pleasantness of a locality).

Anticipating that this will be dismissed as a subjective matter, they cite numerous decisions by interstate planning tribunals, upholding residents' reasonable concerns about amenity.

ERA argue that Mr Habib's plans will lead to increased traffic; issues of traffic safety in the narrow Cavanagh Crescent and at its exit into Giles Street; increased noise; increased pedestrian traffic.

The amenity of the broader surroundings will also be affected for the worse, says ERA: there will be an impact on views from Anzac Hill; an impact on the environment, on the skyline, on the walkers using the tracks nearby and on the national park (from weeds and domestic dogs).

They also argue against the application on planning grounds: it would represent a significant and unreasonable departure from the currently endorsed Town Plan.

According to the submission, the objective of an SU zoning, as outlined in the Town Plan, is to accommodate specific development projects which may not be permissible or adequately catered for in other zones.

They argue that Mr Habib's development proposals are certainly "adequately catered for" and "permissible" in other zones.

They quote the Town Plan as stating that the development proposal for an SU zoning must be specific, but say Mr Habib's proposals are only at the concept stage "with no supporting information in the form of engineering specifications and drawings, drainage proposals, environmental impact statements" and so on.

The restriction of building height to one storey would be inadequate, ERA argues.

They understand a block of units in Bloomfield Street has been classified as single storey because the two levels are "mezzanine" levels.

Any control should use an actual height limit, inclusive of footings, slab, walls, roof line and so on, says ERA.

They recall that the community of Alice Springs has repeatedly opposed ridge-top development. The particular site, they say, "is essentially hostile and certainly ill-suited for intense development", especially the development of home gardens.

"To sustain a range of Australian and inevitably exotic species, a commitment to continued soil development, fertilising regimes and intense irrigation would be required. This in the longer term is very likely to have an adverse affect on surrounding vegetation habitats."

Rainfall absorption on the site is minimal, they say, with often huge surface run-off.

The submission quotes the objection of a former tenant on the site, Harry Osborn who ran his trail riding business from there.

Over the five to six years Mr Osborn lived there, "moderate to heavy rainfall would cause the septic system to flood with overflow ending up running down the hill slope into Burke Street".

The application comes before the Development Consent Authority on August 21.

Author of the application, Paul Hinkly, has not been authorised to answer questions on Mr Habib's behalf.

## **ART CENTRE NEAR ALICE SPRINGS WILL VIE FOR RECOGNITION, TOURIST DOLLAR. Report by ERWIN CHLANDA.**

A cultural centre soon to be opened at Amoonguna will give tourists a link to Aboriginal art and lifestyles so sorely missed at the moment, says painter Marie-Elena Ellis.

Merely a 15 minute drive from the centre of Alice Springs the facility will be readily accessible to large numbers of tourists.

Ms Ellis says at present visitors mainly see "Aboriginal people affected by alcohol" but miss out on the positive aspects of Aboriginal life.

The centre "will build self respect by working as a community".

"We need support, not criticism," says Ms Ellis.

Tourists will be able to buy, from the source, works by well-known "dot" painters in the community.

If tourists bring dollars "that will be great", she says.

But tourists will also get a chance to experience life in an Aboriginal community & presently all but impossible because of distances and access restrictions elsewhere.

Ms Ellis says the centre will employ locals, possibly under a CDEP scheme.

Artists will sell their paintings, and the centre will retain a portion "to keep it going".

She says the main inspiration for the venture has been Keringke Arts in Sta Teresa although that does not offer significant opportunities for tourists to visit and mainly markets its works away from the community.

Ms Ellis, who will next year complete a four year course in early childhood education at Batchelor Institute, says other successful cultural centres are at Balgo and Warburton & both far more remote than Amoonguna & and one was opened in Tennant Creek recently.

Amoonguna CEO Barry Byerley says the centre is being set up in the former community store & idle for past 10 years.

The 300 square metre building is being refurbished at a cost of \$40,000, coming from revenue of the Amoonguna Council.

Mr Byerley says all applications for funding had been knocked back by ATASIC.

He says it seems the community is being judged by its past history Ð not its present initiatives, including a new store started two years ago and now turning over \$400,000.

The new art centre is likely to be opened before the end of the year.

## **GROG TRIAL: GIVE OUR FAMILIES FAIR GO. Report by KIERAN FINNANE.**

Two senior Aboriginal women are calling for renewed action on grog after the Liquor Commission's weakening of alcohol restrictions in Alice Springs (see last week's issue). Margaret Kemarre, OAM and Margaret Heffernan made their heartfelt call to the Alice News last Sunday. They are shocked that the way is now open for cheap cask wine to come back onto the market, while cheap cask port also remains available. This is what they said:-They are doubling up two casks, the red one [port] and Coolibah [moselle].

Port itself is really damaging. All you people out there, you've got to see this port killing all our families, all my family, all your family, families and families.

Alcohol is related to non-Aboriginal people. When Aboriginal people started using alcohol, it was like a big bomb coming to us.

Anyone out there who supports what we are saying, come in and talk to the newspapers and to organisations.

Don't get mixed up in alcohol Ð this year we've got to make a good year for families. We want our young people to grow up to be good Aboriginal people.

If these are the wrong words I am putting in this paper, come and see me (Margaret Kemarre) at 40 South Terrace.

Aboriginal people are the most strong people who have come into this world. We've got good leaders, good speakers, good families, strong culture in our lives. Keep all that strong faith in every individual person, no matter who you are or what language you speak.

We would like to support what Agnes Abbott said in this paper [Alice News, March 5, "Port wine turns Alice valley into living hell"]. She didn't say her words just for herself, she spoke for all Aboriginal families, not only people at Hidden Valley. She saw [the problem] widely.

We are talking from our hearts. This comes from two women here today. The government should not put two casks out. The government looks at the money side. We look at the people side, with sadness and broken hearts.

We don't want our kids to grow up in this.

Let's start this year as a good year, even though it didn't start out well. Give our families a fair go.

## **A TOWN WITH A BIG HEART. COMMENT by ERWIN CHLANDA.**

Last week Jan Heaslip said to me when misfortune strikes, Alice Springs responds like a family.

That is something I've known, more or less, from my 30 years as a journalist in The Centre, covering a string of tragedies including the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, the Connair Kamikaze Attack, the Inland Motel Mack Truck Murders at Ayers Rock and Azaria.

But absolutely nothing had prepared me for the outpouring of caring and support, in deeds even more than words, when our family home burned in the evening of July 12 and Ð together with Kieran, Jacqui and Rainer Ð I was a victim instead of a journalist.

We live in a community that is very wonderful, indeed.

Before we even learned of our misfortune (we were camping out on the Larapinta Trail) friends in our neighbourhood had saved our 4WD, while swags were burning on its roof; others had come from town with food and collected clothes for us, as all of ours (together with everything else in the house) had been destroyed.

We immediately had offers of accommodation.

Dozens more would follow Ð including flats and homes for a number of weeks É no charge, "just let us know when you want the keys".

A woman came into the Alice News office (I was out) and asked for the spelling of my name. She wrote it on an envelope, which she left on my computer keyboard.

It contained \$200 and a brief message of sympathy. She did not leave her name. This money will be going to Jacqui and Rainer. Thank you!

There was another anonymous donor of money. There have been offers of the loan of cars. There have been flowers. People have left clothes and household items at the motel where we are staying. Friends are inviting us to eat with them or bringing us meals, and one has been doing our washing - and much more.

Journalists, sales people and contributors to the Alice News went all out to help us maintain its regular appearance. We have had hundreds of phone calls, or encounters in the street, with people deeply concerned about our plight which, by comparison with others, is not grave, as all four of us are unharmed and much of what was destroyed can be rebuilt.

Some of the people consoling us have experienced greater suffering than ours. Their acts of kindness have been deeply touching.

People listen. We get many hugs. Alice is great.

## **HISTORIAN PUTS INTO PRINT TALES 'BUNGALOW' GUIDE. Report by DOROTHY GRIMM.**

The living history of the Alice Springs Telegraph Station is told to visitors by a man who lived it, Alec Ross, and is now the subject of a booklet by history writer, Shirley Brown.

Shirley was commissioned to write the 30-page booklet about guide Alec by Brenton and Edwina McRae, Telegraph Station managers, after requests by many visitors for something to read about Alec after experiencing his tour. Alec has been a tour group leader at the Telegraph Station since 2000. He also lived there from 1939-1942 when it was known as "The Bungalow" and was home for part-Aboriginal children.

Alec told Shirley he was three years old when he was taken to the Bungalow because he was very sick. It was thought he would have a better chance of getting better meals there to get him back to good health again.

Shirley was asked to write Alec's story while she was in the midst of working on her book, "Legends of the Red Heart", which was released last year.

As soon as "Legends" was completed, Shirley began working on Alec's story, based on interviews Shirley and others have had with him. "Alec, A Living History of the Alice Springs Telegraph Station", was released earlier this year. The book not only tells of Alec's life as a young child both in Alice Springs and other parts of the NT but also follows Alec as a young man, a boxer, a family man and his work at the Ross River Homestead and Tennant Creek before coming back to the Telegraph Station as a guide. Photographs, both black and white and colour, throughout the book enhance its appeal.

In telling Alec's story, Shirley is able to provide an insight into some of the events and policies which have shaped Australia's history and which Alec talks about with visitors and tourists at the Telegraph Station.

"I've been told the book is very popular with tourists," Shirley said. "After a tour of the Telegraph Station with Alec everyone wants a copy. Even before it was released people were leaving their names and addresses and asking to have a copy sent to them as soon as the book was available."

## **THE GREATEST GAME OF ALL: TWO DECADES FULL OF RUGBY THRILLS (Part 2). Report by PAUL FITZSIMONS.**

Last week the Alice Springs News traced the history of the first two decades of Rugby League in Alice Springs. This week the celebration of the "greatest game of all" continues, looking at the achievements of the last 20 years.

1983 - 2003.

Rugby League, after its formative years of the 'sixties and 'seventies, took on a more professional image in the 'eighties and 'nineties in Alice Springs.

It built up to a crescendo in 1992 when the Broncos and Illawarra's Steelers played on Anzac Oval. Alas a few short years later the game received a heavy blow when Super League almost took it apart Australia wide. The 'eighties however were the salad days of Rugby League in Alice Springs. The Telford Memorial club took the first two flags of

the 'eighties, but it was West who dominated from there on, winning five premierships for the decade. With wins from 1983 to '85, West went down to the Todd Tavern Bears in 1986 and '87, only to resurface as premiers in 1988, '89 and '90.

On field Westies had a master in Archie Tanna. As coach Tanna moulded a side brimming with talent, including Shaun Friedrichs from Queensland; locals Rab Watkins and Ron Donnelly; and the bulldozers, Paul Bushette and Keith Darke. The trump card, however, was Tanna. He could weave through a defence with the grace of a ballroom dancer, and was the architect of the Dragons' dominance. Off field they were halcyon times for West as well, as week in week out the Dragon supporters, led by Joe Butler, Keith Jarrett, and a bloke called "Tin head", would fill the eastern mound of Anzac Oval, creating the Dunga Hill Club.

In the Memorial camp the die hards never forgot their premierships of the early 'eighties and, while they laboured for wins under the coaching of Stevie Gann late in the decade, there was enduring support from in front of the bar where Jimmy O'Grady would keep the side going with his chant of "Up the Memo".

For United the late 'eighties were marked by the leadership of a double degreed lawyer, come motor bike enthusiast, Mick O'Loughlin. The Magpies had a 1982 premiership to hang their hat on for the decade, and while not tasting the spoils of another flag had loyal support with their home base, the Verdi Club. It was here that Sunday nights became occasions to remember. The most significant change to Central Australian Rugby League came in the mid-eighties, when an ex school teacher, Jim Lalley, came to town to take over the Todd Tavern. Prior to this the Bears Club had been socially based mostly at the Stuart Arms. With the switch to the Todd Tavern, big moves were made.

Lalley, not to be one to want to lose, set about recruiting from his homestate in Queensland. He gained the services of a core of footballers who also doubled up as suitable employees at the Todd. Ray Lumbly and Mal Greene were two such recruits, quite capable of turning a game in their own right. With the purpose built, almost imported line, the Bears duly won flags, and in doing so lifted the standard of CARFL football. A stand out performer of the era was Terry Saunders who had played internationally for Halifax in England, and in Queensland. He was a consummate professional and was a significant instrument in the process of change in local Rugby League. A memento of the Bears' achievement was a photograph of the inaugural victorious team stark naked covering the wall in the back bar of the Todd Tavern. Administration within the CARFL also underwent a period of change from the mid-eighties. Ex-PNG teacher Terry Lewis came to town and from 1986 set about building an effective League Executive. Lewis strove to improve the game, attracting the NSW supremos John Quail and Ken Arthurson to games at Anzac Hill, and hosting visiting sides.

A British Barbarians side ran on against Alice Springs in 1986, and later the Canterbury Bulldogs paid a social visit. On his bench Lewis had life member Peter "Winner" McKenna as treasurer, a warrior of old from the RSL stable, John Goodwin from the Magpies, the entrepreneurial Ron Burnard, Glen Fox, and Rob Fraser from Ansett.

The high point of Alice Rugby League came in the early 'nineties when the local side hosted a Territory championship and was able to post a win over Darwin in the final.

On top of the win over the Territorians from the Top End, Centralians were treated to Rugby at its best in 1992 when the Broncos played the Illawarra Steelers in a pre season game at Anzac Oval. For locals the game was simply mind blowing. On the day of competition, semi trailers rolled through the Anzac Oval gates, and in a matter of hours, television standard lighting was erected and an electronic scoreboard mounted, converting the paddock into a spectacular colosseum.

Duly the crowds arrived and packed the stadium to "full house" status. Interestingly, despite the huge attendance there was little need for crowd control as the travelling Rugby League circus put on a show that was to become an indelible mark in the memory of all who attended.

So significant was the game that a photo of the occasion is displayed in the foyer in the Alice Springs Town Council office. Almost coinciding with this high point of League was the introduction of a six team competition in the CARFL. Southern Districts, a predominantly Indigenous side, entered the competition, as did the Knights, resplendent in their orange strip. While the life and times of both clubs were short lived, the Knights actually scored a premiership in their inaugural year, 1991. Starring for the Knights was Scott Leece, who took out media and League awards for the season.

Another side, Centrals, also emerged, taking the honours in 1992 and 1993, and later amalgamating to survive as Central Memorial.

From a seemingly impregnable position, Rugby League then entered its darkest era.

On the national front the ill fated Super League took over the major league and in doing so split the loyalties of the Australian League fraternity.

In the bush, the lure of gaining financial assistance particularly in the development of juniors, swung the CARFL,

under president Dave Saxon, to vote in favour of Super League. And as the adage "live by the sword die by the sword" implies, when Super League failed, Alice Springs Rugby League was served a huge body blow.

Crowds disappeared, administrators became few, and standards dropped. In the 'nineties United affiliated with the Federal Sports Club and they were able to win a premiership in 1994, 1996 and again in 1999. Central Memo also had a wave of fame by taking flags in 1997, 1998 and 2000.

In recent years the league has settled to run as a four team competition: United, West, Central Memo and the Vikings. The Vikings have evolved with a solid police base, and over the past two years have been premiers.

These days the game is benefiting from the enthusiasm of Warren Collits as Development Officer. He took on the position when Ron Raper returned to the East Coast after an esteemed contribution particularly with juniors.

Of a Saturday morning Collits controls the junior fixtures. In the afternoon of late he has taken on the coaching role at Wests. And during the week Collits finds the time to keep League alive in schools. Although the game has received a battering in recent times, the signs are visible that improvement is on the way. For 40 years the "greatest game of all" has been a significant contributor to sporting life in Alice Springs. By dropping down to a Saturday fixture Centralians can contribute to the anniversary celebrations.

## **TOP DOGS LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE. Report by PAUL FITZSIMONS.**

West footballers sent out a warning sign on Sunday that they are hot to trot for a back to back premiership, when they accounted for ladder leader Pioneer.

The Bloods scored 20.8 (128) to the Eagles 13.16 (94) in a game where both sides would have gone home with messages ringing in their ears.

In the second game of CAFL action at Traeger Park, South cruised to a comfortable 123 point win over a battling Federal outfit. The Roos scored 27.15 to Feds' 8.6.

The real eye opener was in the game between the top two sides.

West had a "day out" in kicking accurately and so running home 34 point winners over the Eagles who in fact had one more scoring shot. However there were more lessons to be learned from the encounter than the result on the scoreboard.

For the Bloods things came together. Kevin Bruce, a player who has always had the potential to go further in his footy, put his game together. In the forwards he was personally responsible for five goals. And then when challenged with the task of taking on Craig Turner in ruck, he was well and truly up to the task.

Wests also went one step further in releasing the effectiveness of Brett Stevens. Stevens booted seven goals as the Bloods' spearhead and, in doing so, showed he has the frame and momentum that is most effective in CAFL competition.

Andrew Wesley again featured in the win. This recruit to the Milner Road camp has shown a capacity to gather and deliver efficiently, with time to spare, while many around him are surging to no avail.

Darryl Lowe was also instrumental in the West win. He was assigned to shadow the latest Pioneer star, Joel Campbell, and he did it in such a manner that Campbell was restricted to a single goal for the game. Once again Adam Taylor took every thing dished, probably gave as much in return and contributed significantly to the West win. Similarly Michael Gurney gave nothing but 100 per cent all day, and the Ti Tree star Curtis Haines was again there, be it in ruck or in the forwards, adding his touch of class.

For Pioneer the loss could well signal the turning point in the season for a club conscious of tradition and the significance of premiership flags. Graeme Smith returned for his first run of the season. Understandably he was not about to set the world on fire, but benefited from the outing, and all going well will be a powerhouse again come the business end of the season. So too Lachlan Ross will from here see the value of a training run or more, and have himself in tip top condition come September. On the track Craig Turner is enjoying a season to remember, and given he can avoid attracting the attention of men in white with yellow and red cards on board, he could well be up there on Minnaham Medal night. In the younger circle, Geoff Taylor played a pearler of a game, as did Daniel McCormack. The late game was one that South will benefit from. They had a determined Federal play with some form of system early in the game. Cedric Cook stood out as a player who can make things happen, and with Aaron Haines capitalising on his pace, and Kelvin Kopp, Ralph Turner and Sheldon Palmer in support, the Demons looked an improved side. However the power of the Roos became evident in the second term, especially revealing the weak spots in the Demon defence. Souths enjoyed an eight goal second quarter, which set them up for a win. They then kicked five goals

five to two points in the third term and rattled home with a ten goal last quarter. Heading the attack was Malcolm Ross who bagged ten goals for the match. He is a player with potential. Edwin Cooke also chimed in with four goals and proved again that players from the communities have the skills to play significant roles in the continuing tradition of the CAFL.

It was also a match to be remembered by Willy Tilmouth. He unleashed a prodigious 50 metre plus goal which must have taken him back to his halcyon days and restored his belief in being able to be part of a South premiers side this year. South won the game well and will continue to improve as the real part of the season approaches. Sitting in third spot they cannot discount their chances of running onto Traeger Park on grand final day.

### **We are NOT materialistic? COLUMN by STEVE FISHER.**

Somebody once told me that a characteristic of Territorians is that they are less materialistic than other Australians. At first, I didn't give the idea any credence. After all, we are exposed to the same advertising, pressure to keep up with the Joneses and the latest fashions and fads whether we live in Tennant Creek or Toorak. Not only that, but lots of people come to the Territory for the "opportunities" that are on offer, the classic euphemism for the financial rewards of a shortish contract. And people who seek money are also looking for material benefit.

Having put that subject to bed and feeling smug about my penetrating analysis, I didn't think about it again until I went to a capital city. All the malls are the same, whether Rundle, Queen St or Whatisname Mall. It's hard to tell the difference. Anyway, I was walking along a mall when a woman suddenly swung around and bashed into me. It wasn't one of those minor collisions that lead to apologies by both people, even if neither is to blame. No, this was a head-on crash, except that she was much shorter than me, causing the woman's nose to hit my breast bone. It wasn't a pretty sight, but thankfully the contents of her nose stayed in place as she rebounded and then hurried quickly away.

I tried to brush this off as an isolated incident, but then the next day a similar thing happened. This time the person doing the unpredictable swinging was even shorter in stature and she elbowed me in the groin, causing me to exclaim openly in a public place. It was like a scene from one of those old Walter Matthau or Jack Lemmon movies where the old guy is bewildered in a frantic main street at around the time consumerism really got going after the war.

You should know by now that nothing ever happens in this column without there being a lesson to learn from it. As I nursed my parts and felt like a genuine victim of assault, I realised that both my unapologetic assailants were also victims. They were suffering from shopping frenzy. Half-hearted mid-year sales were taking place and they were dashing from one store to another like the proverbial blue-bottomed fly. I have done this too, but not since I lived in Alice Springs.

A week later, I took a bus ride along the Sunshine Coast. I'll spare you a detailed description of the bus, but needless to say it was a beautiful little aqua-blue vehicle on which all-day rover tickets were valid. I thought I had died and gone to public transport heaven.

This coastal trip didn't involve much coast because there was a commercial strip of twenty unbroken kilometres in length from north to south. It was lined with competing outlets for golf equipment, manchester, furniture, electrical goods, videos, fast food and even faster food, more golfing stuff and every other item you could imagine. There was greater material wealth on view than in the whole of the Territory (and I'm including Casuarina Square).

Along this strip, my favourite shop name was Suburban Surf. Sure enough, if you peered through the hoardings and the billboards, you could catch a glimpse of the surf to which the store was referring. But to reach the ocean, first you had to fight off the temptation to buy a new lounge suite in the sale at Super A-Mart.

If you go to the cities, you see products for which you have never had a use and didn't realize that you needed them so badly until you saw them. But when you bring them back to the Alice and get them out of your bag they miraculously turn into daggy items that you don't need.

In the light of all these experiences, I have changed my mind. Territorians are less materialistic than everybody else.  
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### **Will all of the Territory soon be off limits? COLUMN by ANN CLOKE.**

At the weekend David and I invited a few friends over to celebrate life in general and welcome Mum and Dad back to Alice Springs.

Conversation flowed, everything from the weather Ð minus three degrees (!) when the folks left Christchurch early Friday morning Ð to sport: tennis, golf, the South African/All Blacks rugby; the inaugural Ghan trip to Darwin (already being advertised overseas); liquor licensing back-flip and local issues; the roaring of the power-house; litter and the ever popular topic, anti-social behaviour in our town.

You'll never never know if you never never go É how many restrictions now bind our Territory.

Much of the Northern Territory promotional literature tells intending visitors, international and local, to put Kakadu National Park on the itinerary. Small tour operators such as Kakadu Dreams promise a "hands on" learning and fun experience Ð camping out under big skies, croc spotting by night, relaxing under cool waterfalls, learning about the dreamtime and mythology of the Gagudju, the local Indigenous people for whom Kakadu National Park has been named.

It has been suggested that the Federally appointed organization, Parks Australia, which runs all of the NT's national parks is anti-development and anti-tourism. Only a small percentage of Kakadu National Park has ever been accessible to the public, and it's getting smaller.

Popular tourist destination, Twin Falls, has recently become a "no go" zone Ð access has been refused to the pool since June 13 because of an alleged crocodile sighting and the climb to the top of falls was closed in early July because of safety concerns due to loose rocks. People die searching for the magic Ð warning signs are ignored and they wander, without sufficient water supplies, off designated walking tracks and become lost: How do we protect people against themselves?

Experience the mystique of the Red Centre: try and capture suitable images of our stunning Red Centre and the Rock whilst conforming to current legislation lobbied for by Parks Australia, restrictions and censorship, placed on amateur and professional photo-buffs alike.

(No, I'm not going to rehash the Bromley, Unbearable Nonsense affair, except to note that I've had interesting feedback, mainly pro the bear).

Slowly but surely access to our Territory, under the control of Parks Australia, is shrinking, and, at some point, this must start to impact on visitation numbers: ergo, much sought after tourist dollars.

Around town, much of the Central Business District is also a no go zone, with strips of orange and yellow bunting restricting access to sections of footpaths, roads and car parks.

Why not simply declare the whole of the NT off limits and be done with itÉBright strips of bunting strung along the coastline, and anything else off limits, along with appropriate signage and promotion elsewhere, will ensure that all intending visitors decide to venture anywhere other than here. Can you imagine News Flash! Visitors to Africa will no longer be granted access to any game reserves, Hwange, Kruger, Okavango Delta, Masai Mara, Hluhluwe and Umfolozi.

Following the lead of Parks Australia, and the closing of much of the Northern Territory in consideration of crocodile sightings, loose rocks and cannons, respecting of sacred sites and Indigenous culture and the protection of people against themselves, the African Safaris Board has closed all game reserves because there's an extremely good chance that great white hunters, hoping to shoot anything and everything on film, may see elephants, lions, zebras, wildebeest, buffalo, hippos, rhinos and crocodiles and the sheer excitement of it all could cause palpitations and other nasties.

The whole point of visiting wild natural places is to experience them Ð wart(hog)s and all. Mum and Dad are looking forward to revisiting favourite places and noting changes in and around our Centre. Realistically the rules are tightening up, and conservationists often clash with commerciality.

Parks Australia is taking radical steps to close our national parks with seemingly little regard to the damage being done to the local economy, and that effects all Territorians.

There is an urgent need for a Territory body to be appointed to ensure our parks, land, culture and tourism ventures are safeguarded, managed and controlled in a commercially viable way. So that the Northern Territory is again promoted as a go destination, instead of no go.

## **FIRESTICK DREAMING ART KINDLES INTEREST. Review by KIERAN FINNANE.**

Fire Stick Dreaming by Betty Carrington is a striking figurative work in a show of otherwise bold abstracted images from Warmun Art Centre, currently at Gallery Gondwana.

Betty is a Gija woman who grew up at the old Turkey Creek Post Office, now the Warmun Art Centre, where she

started painting in 1998.

In this work, rendered in natural ochres and pigments , she shows the Gija's people monthly ritual of burning a fire stick and holding it up to the new moon.

They "goorarra the moon" (talk to it in language) and ask it to bring them good hunting and often also wish for good health, good luck and so on.

Warmun is midway between Kununurra and Halls Creek in the north-east Kimberley.

The reputation of Warmun art was established largely by George Mung Mung, Rover Thomas and Queenie McKenzie.

With the passing of these three artists other older established artists, such as Lena Nyadbi, Mabel Juli, Patrick Mung Mung, Beerbee Mungari, Madigan Thomas and Gordon Barney, have continued to develop and explore their respective styles.

At the same time a new generation of young artists, including Betty and her grand daughter Charlene Carrington, as well as Colleen Carter, Katie Cox, Mark Nodea, Marcie Purdie, and Denise Mung have emerged.

Also showing at Gallery Gondwana are Tiwi cloth works and Warburton glass.

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