



Northern Land Council

MEDIA RELEASE

Larrakia build on a developing future

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Larrakia people will be major property developers in Darwin, following a landmark agreement with the NT Government.

Under a commercial lease, which will be acquired from the NT Government on commercial terms, they plan to undertake the urban land development of nearly 50 hectares of the Rosebery suburb at Palmerston over the next 3-4 years.

The agreement with the NT Government settles a native title claim lodged in May 1994 by the Larrakia people. This was the first native title claim lodged in the Northern Territory.

The agreement had been arranged with the previous CLP Government, but had not been finalised or signed before the election.

Following discussions between Larrakia representatives and the new NT Government, a formal signing will take place in the near future.

The agreement means that about 250 hectares in the Rosebery and Bellamack suburbs at Palmerston are available for development without native title concerns. It follows intensive negotiations between the NLC, the Larrakia and the NT Government over the past two years.

While paving the way for growth in the satellite town of Palmerston, the agreement also enables the Larrakia to become involved in the urban development.

In addition, and as a gesture of good will, the Larrakia have waived native title and compensation over the nearby Archer Sporting Complex including land for expansion - ensuring that new sporting facilities will be available for all Palmerston residents.

“This is a very exciting settlement which shows that the NT Government and the Larrakia can work together for positive developments in the Darwin region - without costly and protracted court cases,” Northern Land Council Chairman Galarrwuy Yunupingu said.

Larrakia traditional owner Mr Bill Risk said the Larrakia were pleased to be able to be involved in development on their traditional lands, participating in the growth of the Territory.

He said they hoped to begin work on the suburb as soon as possible, and the first steps are to submit detailed plans and specifications for the first stage of the development.

“The Larrakia have been involved in a number of agreements allowing for the development of the Territory in recent times, including the railway corridor,” Mr Risk said.

“This time, we are becoming involved in the development itself, which is an exciting new direction for us.

“Like most other Territorians, we are concerned about development that is too rapid, environmentally dubious, or not well thought out.

“But when the development is a good one, we are willing to negotiate.”

Mr Risk said the intention was to develop a variety of attractive housing lots at competitive prices. The concept at the moment involves about 325 housing lots, comprising house, courtyard, duplex and unit sites. A portion will be handed back to the NT Government for public housing.

The venture will open doors for Aboriginal employment during construction, as well as providing profits which will be held in trust and re-invested in other enterprises for the benefit of all Larrakia.

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Rosebery subdivision “just the start” for Larrakia people

The Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC) says the agreement with the Northern Territory Government for the commercial development of the Rosebery suburb at Palmerston is just one of a number of proposed major capital projects that will offer training and employment for Aboriginal people living in the greater Darwin area.

LNAC has developed a longterm strategy involving a number of developments to ensure Aboriginal people in the region have a chance to translate their native title interests into jobs and opportunities for the future.

Mr Kelvin Costello, Coordinator for LNAC said that the Rosebery subdivision would open the opportunity for Larrakia and other non-Larrakia Aboriginal people to be employed in a range of trades associated with the building/construction, landscaping, earth works and road development industries.

“This is just the start for us,” he said.

“The subdivision is the first of a number of projects we are looking at that will play a part in the economic development of the Territory, will provide facilities to enhance the Territory – and at the same time will provide real training and real jobs for Aboriginal people.”

The next project in the pipeline is the proposed Larrakia Cultural Facility at Bullocky Point next to the Darwin High School.

LNAC has recently undertaken a Masterplan and Feasibility Analysis for the facility, which is based on the Larrakia people’s wish to be able to show case the history, culture and attachment to their traditional lands, as well as developing commercial activities that will provide sustainable employment for Larrakia and non-Larrakia Aboriginal people.

The LNAC has also been involved with the NT Indigenous Sports Council’s Development Proposal for a Sports and Social Complex at Marrara.

The LNAC has held a number of discussions with representatives from the NT Indigenous Sports Council, and the LNAC supports the development of the Sports Complex.

Mr Costello said that both the proposed Larrakia Cultural Facility and the NT Indigenous Sports Complex will also create a number of sustainable employment opportunities, particularly in the areas of Tourism, Hospitality and Entertainment.