

Dear Friends,

Planning in 2009

It has been a busy and challenging year for our organization, with the development star clearly in the ascendancy. Planning for community has not been the government's order of the day. Social, cultural, environmental, and long term economic sustainability have been severely neglected by decision makers. In spite of that, we have soldiered on and have had a few wins.

PLan has responded to many development applications, proposed planning amendments, and written to the Chief Minister, Planning Minister, Minister for NRETAS, local members, senior bureaucrats, relevant Commonwealth bodies, and to the NT Ombudsman.

We have attended local community meetings, and Development Consent Authority (DCA) hearings. We have helped people in person, by telephone and email. We have informed media, often with little take-up.

All this experience has convinced us that the normal planning process is broken, but most of you can see that this is broken already.

We look forward to working in 2010 with Honourable Gerry McCarthy, the new Minister for Planning, through the new PLan Committee.

Please stay in contact, as it will be an important year for planning.

Regards,
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If you have not yet renewed your membership, and updated your details, a Membership/Renewal form can be found on our website. We are also always interested in new members at just \$10 per year.

Strategic Planning and Planning

This year it has been realised that a major lack of strategic planning has caused development to get ahead of planning in the Northern Territory, leading to a 'hit and miss effect'. This has been exacerbated by the inadequacy, conflicts and loopholes of NTPS, by DCA failure to apply the Planning Act, particularly Section 51, to its decision making, and of departmental planners to genuinely include the community in its negotiations and assessments. An NT Government has been so committed to business and development that it has failed in its promise to listen to the people on such a vital matter as planning.

The big responsibility of establishing twenty-two new towns should cause us to step back and think about what sustainable planning is meant to achieve in our times. Amongst other things, a return to planning by land use objectives is indicated.

Immediate NT Essentials for Good Planning

Year 2009 has again demonstrated the need for:

1. An independent Environment Development Protection Authority (EPA) with the same status and full range of functions as those in the Australian states, not the poor substitute we have at present.
2. An independent Darwin Harbour Management Authority for Darwin's prime tourist asset.
3. A Heritage Advisory Council and heritage system which will to protect our heritage sites and precincts
4. The re-establishment of a planning scheme based on land use objectives.
5. A complete review of the whole planning process, including the role of the DCA, so as to provide for strategic planning, and avoid compromise to an overbearing development imperative.
6. The proper, honest, balanced and genuine prior involvement of the community in consultation on planning matters, leading to greater social, cultural, environmental and long term economic sustainability
7. The establishment of an Administrative Appeals Tribunal as in the Australian states.

Factors in Strategic Planning

As responsible community members we need to look at the big picture again. The NT Government has already made a start. PPlan is concerned about balance in planning and development. We aim at sustainable planning in terms of social, cultural, environmental and long term economic outcomes. Some factors in planning are general and basic, but some of the special ones have a significant effect.

General Basic Factors

} Land availability	} Land capacity
} Water resources	} Land uses required
} Population growth	} Work availability
} Public transport (buses, ferries, light rail)	} Power and Water infrastructure
} Functional communities	} Safety
} Residential Areas	} Free Public Recreational Space
} Nature Parks and Reserves	} Heritage Preservation

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Public and community services } Tropical Lifestyle } Parking } Catchment Protection } Provision for Seniors } Transport infrastructure (rail, roads, bridges, ports, airports, light rail, cycling, pedestrian ways) } Key economic industries – mining, tourism, cattle, agriculture/horticulture and fishing } Levels of Government Activity – Local, Territory, Commonwealth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Industrial zones } Darwin Harbour and Foreshores } Policing } Pollution control |
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Special Factors with Significant factors

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Development of Weddell } Minerals Exploration Boom } Local Government Reform } Managing Greenhouse Issues } Sea Level Rise } Forestation } Kenbi Land Claim } Industrial Hub } Hospitals } Preservation of agricultural land } Public Transport } Light Rail or Dedicated Bus Channels } Management of Crime and Disorder } Development of the Gunn Peninsula (Koolpinya) } Providing for Self Sufficiency - Transition Towns, etc } Increased Planning Roles for Local Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Affordable Housing } Aboriginal Rights and Native Title } Commonwealth Intervention } Recycling } Land Clearing issues } Local Power generation } Impact of LNG } Defence Build Up } Gaols and Rehabilitation } Alternative Forms of Housing } Park and Ride } Cycle Paths |
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Darwin CBD

CBD Precincts of Special Public Significance

Very often precincts or areas, rather than single lots have special historical/heritage significance. The old Conservation zone between Bennett Street and the eastern Esplanade, in the CBD, now remains unprotected from development. Originally separate, it was subsumed some years ago into the CDB zone. Rumours are that a multi-storey Federal Court building could be built to tower over the tiny Anglican cathedral, at the corner of the Esplanade and Smith Street. We feel certain that the community does not want to lose this, one of our last green open spaces with historic/heritage character.

Our public and visiting tourists suffer from the loss of harbour views over the Stokes Hill Wharf area, due to the building of Arkaba Towers, in front of the Civic Centre. A well-known developer ignored years of public representation, ultimately completely privatising all of this view.

The whole of the Esplanade, including this Eastern Esplanade site was promulgated by the Governor General of Australia for the recreational use and enjoyment of the people. The NT Government simply ignored this proclamation.

In regard to the front Esplanade, we must ask our new Planning Minister – Gerry McCarthy - and Chief Minister Paul Henderson, never to permit buildings such as the unfortunately approved building over 20 storeys at No.1 Daly Street, to be accepted as a precedent for similar buildings, anywhere on this key promenade. This is a very special public place, provided through the planning foresight of our first surveyor, George Goyder in the 1870's. Existing planning documents recommend buildings there no higher than the 10 -12 storeys.

Common sense, and buildings, such as those we know as the Beaufort, the Four

Seasons and the Novotel, demonstrates the public benefit of buildings set well back from

this street. They are set back and designed to address the Esplanade, Bicentennial Park, and Darwin harbour, whilst not blocking views from taller buildings in the core of the CBD.

CBD Forum and its Outcomes - Was this Really Honest Public Consultation?

Nearly three years after the 'facilitated' CBD Planning Forum, and after the Urban Design Advisory Panel (UDAP) Report, PPlan was directly pressed twice to attend a government 'consultation'.

We found ourselves among an audience of developers only. The presenter, Mr Rod Applegate of the Planning Department, told us that our issues were not for debate at that time, a strategy he had previously used at the Forum itself. Minister Lawrie subsequently reported to Parliament that PPlan had been consulted. There is no right of reply to Parliament. This appears to be a serious misrepresentation of our views. The public does not like being treated this way.

More CDB Concerns

The NT News reported on 5/12/2009, that the NT Government would announce, before Christmas, that buildings up to 30 storeys will be permitted only in a smaller CBD, limited by the Esplanade, McMinn Street, and Daly Street. The PPlan Community Survey, 2007, of over 400 people, showed that Darwin people do not like tall buildings, and that the taller they are, the less they like them. They are unsuited for the tropical living of the general population, especially families. The DCA has long and often ignored Section 51 of the Planning Act on the provision of public green open space by developers.

Key issues of community concern at the CDB Forum, like street level amenity, pedestrian access, building design and presentation, as affected by ground floor parking, setbacks, interface activities, pavement café's, arcades, walkthroughs, landscaping and open space, and the provision of awnings and entrances, remain unresolved after all this time. Have they

been forgotten, or have we been totally ignored? Obviously the community has not been a government priority. Planting trees in the public road, as suggested by Mr Rob Adams from Melbourne, is hardly a solution for our narrow streets, and a further imposition of costs on the council.

At the Forum, there was wide agreement that tall buildings there should have setbacks at the ground level making for active streetscapes, common elsewhere and particularly appropriate to tropical living. However no setbacks, as the public understands them, are planned in proposed amendments to the NTPS.

The government's recent media release is misleading. The 'setbacks' it mentions are only for buildings over 25 metres tall. They are only to be at various staged elevated levels dependent on the height of the building.

These 'setbacks' will provide no variety of streetscapes or opportunities for varied activities of benefit to pedestrian public, whether local residents or visiting tourists. Such were a central part of what was envisaged by those who attended the Forum. Unless there is a change of heart in government thinking, we will be hurrying along disconsolate streets when we visit the CBD. The government has also failed to provide increased green open spaces within the CBD for the bigger, denser populations living there.

'Merit' appears to have been made a scapegoat in this exercise, since its strange application at No.1 Daly Street may have precipitated the Forum. 'Merit' we are told is to be abolished, as a means of allowing exceptions to the height of buildings. Instead there is to be a special allowance for buildings which the DCA is persuaded demonstrate the use of greenhouse principles.

PLan thinks that this use should be standard, rather an exception attracting a special reward. We expect that some of our better developers would be happy to share such a rule. In the meantime, the Mantra Pandanus opened, with a restaurant on part of the footpath, but without a coach entrance, near a busy corner. Late night Darwin arrivals and

luggage were actually seen unloading mid Knuckey Street. However, questions were asked when the same developer applied for a further 20 storey building in lower Woods Street, again without a proper off street entrance.

Densification Push within Our Suburbs

Many established Darwin residents are concerned at the current government support for densification of existing suburbs. This is being justified in the wake of the cry for 'affordable housing'. However residents do not want uncertainty, and have a right to protect their investments and their amenity. Any subdivision or rezoning application should be handled with extreme care with full information provided by developers and/or the government. There should be full and open public consultation. The character and amenity of established suburbs should not be destroyed by 'urgent' pressured retro-fitting of zones. The standard of 800 square metres should remain the minimum for single dwellings. However, where there is agreement, it seems reasonable to permit some cluster dwellings on larger lots, as these are suitable for some types of residents.

Northern Territory Planning Scheme (NTPS)

Too many exceptions are being made to the NTPS. It was promoted and introduced, just a few years ago, on the basis of a need for uniformity throughout the Northern Territory.

The minimum standard size for single dwelling house lots remains 800 square metres. However, new suburbs are almost always now built (as exceptions, in the Special Uses series – numbered SU's) with average size lots smaller than the standard. The suburb of Lyons in Darwin, on the way to Lee Point, was planned in recent years in this way, for the Defence Housing Authority, by the Canberra Investment Corporation, with lots averaging 700 square metres. About 50% of the houses are for defence families, interspersed with the other lots, but apparently always the smaller ones. Most houses are not built to tropical designs, or for natural cooling. The houses occupy

most of each lot, with little room for gardens, especially shade trees. Internal roads are narrow and setbacks small. The late addition of a community centre was subsidised by Darwin City Council.

The Lyons subdivision is promoted, as is common nowadays, as an 'integrated subdivision'. Such 'master communities' have not generally won the commendation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Report, of 2005, entitled 'Sustainable Cities'. In the neighbouring proposed Muirhead, standard lots are to be smaller again. Neither Lyons nor Muirhead have a school, in contrast with previous northern suburb developments which each have primary schools and ovals as centre pieces. This allows children to walk to school, identify more easily with their community, and not be dependent on bus or car transport.

Suburbs planned via SU's negotiated between developers and the government, have lacked adequate genuine public consultation. The status of the zoning within them has at times been doubtful, especially the protection of designated open spaces. In spite of lot layouts being already established, developers have sometimes 'double dipped' as in the case of the serial setbacks recently demanded of the DCA in Lyons.

Palmerston Planning

The SU device was used to build many of the suburbs, in the satellite city of Palmerston, including homes for defence staff working at Roberson Barracks, although there were some earlier suburbs. The emphasis was on housing to accommodate an increasing population, and developers seek to maximise the turnoff.

Lots are typically under the standard size of 800 square metres, with many houses of enclosed design, very close together, with small gardens. For a long time Palmerston was known for its water tower, roads and roundabouts, but the central public core is now taking some form, with buildings such as the modern library. There is still much to be done to provide free public facilities for residents of Palmerston.

Alice Springs Planning Crisis

Planning conflict in Alice Springs is causing extreme concern to residents, many of whom have lived in the town for a long period of time. The NTPS places a limit of three storeys on buildings in Alice Springs, preventing the DCA from approving higher developments. An application to redevelop the former Melanka Hostel site, near the centre of the town, in a way that part exceeds this height, was received earlier this year. This adjoins a heritage precinct. There is a shortage of accommodation in the town, but that has been the case for many years. Town opinions differ, and feelings strong. The NT Government has moved to change the NTPS.

Alice Springs' tourism based economy depends to a large degree on its international tourist reputation. A case such as this represents a watershed situation for the famous town. More than the limited standard development assessment process is needed.

Residents should be well informed, and open public meetings held by the Department of Planning, so that the issues can be debated, and community feeling measured. The decision should not be hurried. Another issue is the proposal to use Arid Zone Research Institute land for residential development. With climate change issues and the drive for domestic food self sufficiency, questions are being asked about whether it is wise to use this special purpose land for housing. Is it really the case that no other land is available for development? These matters are reported in the on-line Alice News.

Commonwealth Report on Impact of Sea Level Rise on Coastal Zones

The Commonwealth Parliament's Climate Change Committee, issued in the October report entitled 'Managing our coastal zone in a changing climate-the time to act is now' was based on 18 months of Australia wide hearings, and public submissions. It found that sea level rise means coastal development is hazardous. Replacing homes and public infrastructure, and escalating insurance costs are big issues, as well as disaster safety for communities. The Commonwealth aims to establish a role for a consistent Australia wide response.

Those who witnessed the urgent submissions from Torres Strait representatives at Darwin hearing, have no doubt that sea levels are crucially rising. The Committee, led by Jennie George, was very concerned about the Darwin situation, including the low position of the Waterfront Project which it had witnessed firsthand by attending a Convention Centre Conference.

Alienation of Community Zoned Land from the Public

Another most serious issue is the withdrawal of CP (Community Purposes) land from free public use. This has been happening in recent years, in two ways. Firstly there is increasing fencing of land zoned for community purposes, which has until recently been available for casual recreation, walking and picnicking. Clubs like the Tracy Village Sports and Recreation Club, and local schools, are fencing off land zoned for CP (Community Purposes) which the public traditionally has been free to use as public open space. This is trend follows an increased perception of associations and local institutions as 'corporate' organizations. The cumulative effect is significantly reducing open space freely accessible to the public, at a time when the population is increasing.

Secondly some bodies now seek monetary profit from land granted as CP land, zoned for specific community purposes. They try to sell it for profit, or to profit by it by using it for purposes other than the zoned land use. A current case is an attempt to rezone CP (Community Purposes) land assigned for church purposes, for medium density housing, in Nemarluk Drive, Ludmilla. This rezoning is entirely unacceptable. PPlan has been involved with the group of local residents campaigning to preserve this land in the Ludmilla Creek Catchment.

Litchfield Subdivisions

Our members are involved with residents in various parts of Litchfield. Many applications for rezoning and/or developing rural land for closer residential use are being made there, many without accurate

reference to wet season land capability, and access to basic infrastructure and facilities. Given surveyors' long familiarity with this land, and the NTPS, we are surprised that these applications continue. Without town power and water, there is a limit on how small residential lots can be to be sustainable. There is also the risk of too much clearing of natural vegetation, an unwise loss of horticultural land, and inappropriate mixes of horticulture and residential uses.

SOME DIRECT COMMUNITY ISSUES

Crematorium on Amy Johnson

Our first challenge in 2009 was being contacted about the private crematorium proposal in Amy Johnson Avenue, across from the Marrara Christian School. The advertisement was on 9 and 16 January, 2009 when many people are away for summer holidays. Despite objections by many Karama residents, it was approved, with the DCA refusing us a copy of a key report. We still have not seen the report from the Health Department.

Arafura Harbour Proposal

In March/April, there was Even Lynne's and Hans Vos' massive proposal for making a canal estate called Arafura Harbour, by building a wall across Ludmilla Creek and along the Coconut Grove mangroves. The Friends of East Point rallied and ran an effective campaign which PPlan supported. Such estates are banned in NSW, Victoria, and limited in Queensland and WA. We were shocked that Darwin City Council supported the plan 'in principle', before Chief Minister Henderson quashed it because it would be on crown land.

Old Hospital Site

Very disappointingly, in proposing the redeveloping of this site, the NT Government mandated that 20% of its area must be used up by residential blocks to pay for the cost of the park. In a compromise response to local consultation, the NT Government will move these proposed residential apartments away from the Lambell Terrace (Larrakeyah) side, where they would have overlooked houses. However, it will not reduce their height. Through public consultation on the draft design, the public opted for a more natural and less costly park, with an easier to maintain design, than the interstate consultants promoted. It was hoped this reduced cost would lower the height and mass of the apartment buildings 'required' to cover costs. There are some nice features in the park. The basic design was settled early in 2009, after a report from government appointed local cultural consultant Dr Mickey Dewar.

Flagstaff Park and the Sudden Appearance of the Mystery Restaurant

Historically Flagstaff Park is a distinct area beyond the fence at the end of Myilly Point. This is where the NT Army Commander, and later Mr Justice Blackburn, lived in Flagstaff House, before Cyclone Tracy blew it away in 1974. There remain relics of a large tropical garden with tennis courts and flagpole. It is a beautiful site, with high harbour views and natural breezes.

When the NT Government decided on parkland in the central section of Myilly Point, it threw in Flagstaff Park with the rest, as if it had no special historical significance. Local consultant GHD, provided a layout for on-line public comment. It had a list of numbered features on the plan with a key. Surprisingly, a site for restaurant was, without explanation, mysteriously superimposed. It took the prime landmark viewing site looking towards East Point, and was not included in the GHD numbering.

Flagstaff Park was zoned in the time of the previous government for Tourist Development (B5). Beginning in about 1999, a community group, familiar with the site, worked with PPlan to have the area recognised and rezoned as a landmark headland park, for public recreation and picnics. When the ALP won government in 2001, Chief Minister Clare Martin fulfilled an ALP election promise, publicly announcing that the park was saved from tourist development. She announced the return of this park to the people. Flagstaff Park was then rezoned as public open space.

PPlan waited patiently through years of delays between the government and Darwin City Council about who should pay for and manage this neglected park for the People.

It is outrageous, in the face of the ALP government's election promise, that any attempt is made to superimpose a large restaurant site on the park, by business interests. A promise is a promise! This would change the prime usage of the park back to tourism, with traffic making it unsafe for children. The restaurant could easily be located, as we have suggested, with equally good views to East Point, in the middle section of the Myilly Point park.

So frequently PLan, now in its sixteenth year, finds previously made promises and public expectations are being ignored or eroded.

The Unfinished Saga of Little Mindil



We remain actively concerned about the future development of Little Mindil which the public expects to remain largely open space.

When this lot was 'won' by Sky City Casino, through the competitive NT Government 'Expression of Interest' process, the public were told that the Casino's bid was chosen because the land would be used for public events, spread throughout the year. This would allow other casino land to be used for extensions to its hotel.

Remarks at a recent DCA hearing, and the NT News, alerted us to apparent plans to build units on the Little Mindil Escarpment. Both the Escarpment and the creek line are to be professionally rehabilitated. PLan and Landcare groups had always emphasised to Casino management, the importance of the Escarpment environmentally, and had met with no argument over this.

The NRETAS departmental report to Development Assessment Services (DPI DAS) officially recommended to the DCA that the Mindil Beach Escarpment and the land along the creek near existing Sky City Casino car park should be zoned CN (Conservation). This should have prevented building in either of these zones. Strangely the DCA ignored these recommendations, leaving the land vulnerable to construction after the Casino gains freehold title of the lot. Building on the Mindil Escarpment would be travesty, and betrayal.

The NT Government must make sure this cannot happen. Over 6000 people signed petitions to save this crown land for the people. Ownership of the foreshore by the public (not just access) is an Australian tradition. It was well established in this area by the long ago creation of Mindil Beach Reserve, before the Casino was first built. At the recent hearing, the representative for the Casino refused to allow the DCA, or the public, to view the proposed agreement with the government. Another secret deal on the future of key public land! Another public consultation denied!

Protecting the Rapid Creek Catchment

Congratulations to the DCA for refusing to issue a permit for a subdivision application on a Freshwater Road lot in the Rapid Creek Catchment, near the Water Gardens. This section of the Rapid Creek catchment is environmentally protected through a three year effort by local residents, from both sides of the creek, who formed the Jingili and Millner Residents Action Group (JAMRAG). Prior to the key 2001 election, Chris Burns, ALP candidate for Jingili, promised, at a public meeting near the 'little red bridge', that if elected, he would protect Rapid Creek. It may be indicative that both the CLP members for Jingili and Millner lost their seats at this election.

JAMRAG shared its long experience and knowledge of creek behaviour with government planners, including Mark Meldrum, and Landcare volunteers, who have progressively rehabilitated the creek by dedicated work over the years. This led to the Rapid Creek Land Use Objectives protecting the catchment, between McMillans Road and Trower Road, from closer residential subdivision. It stipulated the creation of 50 metre conservation zones each side of the creek, and a minimum size for lots adjoining it. A government land acquisition process was introduced aiming to achieve the necessary riparian buffer along the creek.

Unfortunately, the establishment of the NT Planning Scheme saw the abolition of almost all land use objectives, which should be the bedrock of planning, except for the Litchfield Land Use Objectives. The Rapid Creek Land Use Objectives were 'converted' into one of a series of SU (Specific Use) description statements for the scheme. It so watered down and shortened the statement that its special purpose to protect this precious urban catchment from over exploitation was omitted. Fortunately the DCA did not approve this second subdivision of one of these Freshwater Road lots, below the minimum size. However the Rapid Creek SU (Specific Use) description urgently needs rewording to restore its true purpose. This is to protect this special urban catchment from over development.

Seabright Crescent (Jingili) Motel Consensus

A site at the nearby corner of Seabright Crescent, and Rothdale Road, has seen years of uncertainty as various applications were made to develop a neglected site. Nearby residents will at last be relieved. They recently agreed with the results of a developer consulting with them about proposed motel facilities nearby.

Mitchell Creek Catchment as a Conservation Reserve



Suburbs such as Gunn and Rosebery have grown on the eastern side of Palmerston, towards the Mitchell Creek Catchment. Encroachment on the creek has been the concern of many residents for years, and for a long time land care groups have worked hard to protect and rehabilitate it. Apart from that, it is proved a mistake to build too close to the catchment because wet season saturation undermines structures. The vegetation tells us when we are too close, but some developers and planners refuse to accept this.

Two reports have already recommended that Mitchell Creek be declared a conservation reserve. Thus, there is more than adequate information to support this action. Conservation zoning is not sufficient protection. The huge new eastern suburbs of Johnston, Zuccoli and Mitchell are now in the planning stage.

Late in 2009, PPlan, working on the knowledge and experience of the Palmerston group, wrote to both the Planning Minister, and the Minister for NRETAS, recommending that the Mitchell Creek Catchment be declared a Conservation Reserve. The Palmerston City Council, in its most recent annual report supported this status for the important catchment. We await the NT Government's response.

Charles Darwin's University Proposed Use of CP Land for Residences

On a much larger scale, is the move by the new Vice Chancellor of Charles Darwin University to develop 55 hectares of unused CP (Community Purposes) zoned land (total 127 hectares) at the Palmerston Campus, for residential development?

In 1981, early in the days of Northern Territory Self Government, this land, off University Avenue, was assigned, by Chief Minister, Paul Everingham, for a future 'University of the Northern Territory'. It was CP (Community Purposes) land for educational purposes. Placing the main Northern Territory University campus at Palmerston was then seen as a central growth and employment generator for the new city, as is the case with many American universities in small population centres. Plans were drawn up, and a small first stage built, but the development of our territory university took a different route, with the central campus, faculties and facilities now firmly placed, with the support of Commonwealth funds, at Casuarina in Darwin. In a December presentation to Palmerston City Council, the Vice Chancellor called the land an 'endowment' to the university. If the university uses a large area of it for residential housing (estimated 500 residences) it would hardly be consistent with the core educational purpose for which it was allocated. The assignment of this land at Palmerston should now be more appropriately seen and used as an endowment to this rapidly growing young city.

Times have changed in almost 30 years. Now there should be different long term planning targets, especially with the advent of Weddell, the defence build up, the new East Arm Port, and prospective international industrial development. Did we hear the Vice Chancellor observe that this land is not available for residential purposes because it is zoned specifically for community purposes?

A suburb with 500 houses needs expert planning and consultation with the public. We doubt that residential development is best siphoned through any university. If the university has CP (Community Purposes) land which it will not want directly for educational purposes, it must be passed back to the Northern Territory Government. More university residences may be needed, but not with the present offerings at the Palmerston campus. Increased facilities for a broader range of TAFE/vocational courses would be a boon for Palmerston, Litchfield and other rural residents, particularly young people, but these would not occupy all of this now surplus land. The neighbouring Durack Public School urgently needs land for basic expansion including a larger school library. There are already international sporting ovals at Marrara.

If any new residential subdivision is built in this area, local residents wish to retain natural environment as a green buffer. The lake area is a public benefit. A new entrance statement for Palmerston would need replanning.

HERITAGE

Waterfront Project and Heritage

The long awaited opening of the wave pool and related facilities was welcomed, and has become very popular. This is one return to the people of Darwin from the use of large areas of public land for development.

From the very inception of the Waterfront Project, PPlan has worked with both the project managers and experts interested in Darwin's heritage/history, to protect relevant places in and near the precinct. The old port area is very important in the history of Darwin and the Northern Territory, and is well documented. Maps, information, references, and contact names have been gathered and were provided to management, and directly to the NT Government, so that special places can be preserved, but at times we have been disappointed. One instance was the destruction of the lower part of the Travellers Walk steps, without public consultation, when the roundabout was built at the corner of McMinn Street and Kitchener Drive. Travellers Walk was listed on the Commonwealth Heritage Register.

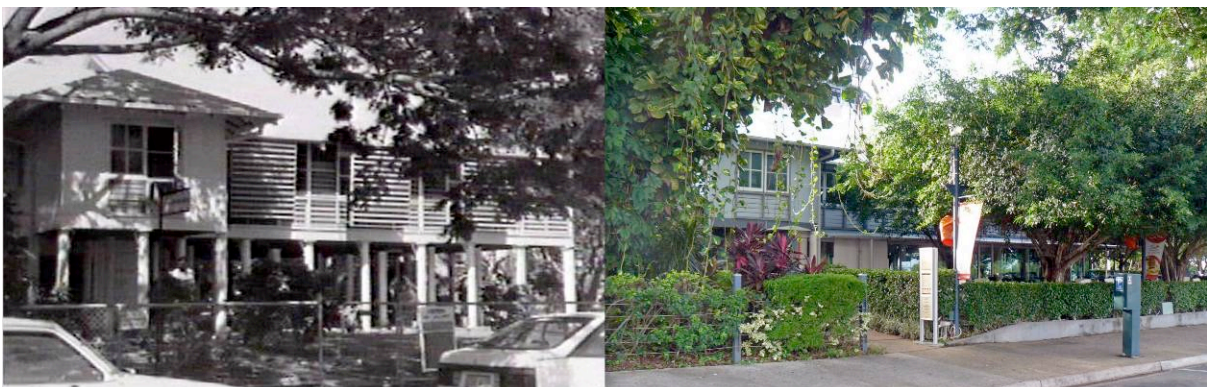
All peoples have a right to expect important heritage/historical places to be preserved as a government initiative. Heritage is also important to tourists who look for authenticity in the presentation of the unique characteristics of places they visit. We are pleased to hear that a previously promised interpretation feature for the history of Darwin, is to be re-instated at a point near the Convention Centre.

Heritage Considerations, Ourselves and Tourism

Has the NT Government forgotten its heritage obligations in spite of earlier supportive debate in Parliament involving almost all MLA's?

For too many years, we have asked Heritage Ministers, where the new Heritage Conservation Act has gone. The repeated answer has been 'with the legislative draftsmen' where a 'final discussion draft' is being prepared. The original draft was a good one which better took into account public perceptions, giving heritage room to breathe. As we wait for its implementation, heritage items can still be partly demolished on the pretext of preserving them! However, in recent months, we have been assured by a Minister for Heritage and Conservation that the discussion draft is now ready for public comment. As yet, we have not seen it.

Old Admiralty House



In spite of its own 'heritage management plan', Old Admiralty House is squeezed, and hardly recognisable, its access limited to restaurant patrons. It carries no named heritage sign for visitors who have come to appreciate the architectural values for which it is listed on the NT Heritage Register. The Asian banners are sorely out of place in what was Darwin's second most important

vice regal site. New garden tree species are strange and alien, compared with what was there before. As if the luxury office and apartment - Admiralty Towers - is not enough exploitation on the Esplanade side of the site, the developers now seek approval to squeeze in another building at the back on the Knuckey Street side. Some are mystified at the two storey building already in place in that corner. How is it that the public was not permitted by the DCA to see the original master plan?



Old Commonwealth Bank

A similar fate awaits the old Commonwealth Bank, with its heritage envelope restricted to about 50% of the site, rather than including the full building we know so well on Bank Corner. This heritage management plan was set without prior public consultation. What was the Heritage Advisory Council's role in this? How is the NRETAS Minister involved? The bank is also set to be overshadowed by a tall tower. Will there be a similar outcome for the current development of the old Chinese 'Stonehouses' site in Cavenagh Street near the Darwin Post Office? This is a very significant building reflecting the role of Chinese business people in the history of Darwin.

New World War II Museum to be built at East Point

An excellent concerted effort and co-operative sharing of expertise through a representative advisory committee, led by NT Museum and Art Gallery professionals, has produced scope plans. The siting of the new World War II Museum is confirmed at East Point, based on \$14 million of funding from the NT Government. A public survey initiated by Audrey Grace, a PPlan member, leaves no doubt that the existing World War II infrastructure there forms the ideal backdrop for the authentic siting of the Museum. With the new Museum built, the site will be even more significant to ourselves, our children and our visitors, including those with family connections with World War defenders.

The new museum's placement at East Point has brought some criticism from CBD interests who wanted this new feature to be in the CBD. Tourist experts know that authenticity is important to visitors interested in heritage. If the aim is for visitors to take time in the CDB, so as to spend money there, an important step is to respect, preserve, and advertise our few remaining CBD heritage places, and places of potential interest. They should not be bulldozed, compromised, relocated to disconnected sites, such as the Botanic Gardens, or whittled away in the interests of developers. We should also make it easy for visitors to enjoy our harbour in every possible way, as it is Darwin's biggest natural tourist asset.

Waiting on our Catalina Heritage

The heritage listing of our World War II Catalina flying boats is long delayed. Months after the proposed heritage listing advertisement, we await confirmation. Is their future secretly denied by the seemingly unsustainable decision to 'shoe horn' the INPEX LNG plant onto mangrove fringed Blaydin Point? Its long pipeline would cut through the mangroves of Middle Arm Peninsular. Its huge tankers turn inconveniently at the mouth of the Elizabeth River. There are

more efficient and environmentally appropriate locations for the INPEX plant, and its loading facilities.

Goyder's Park and the Waterfront Project

PLan felt the lack of real public information coming forward about the care of heritage/history in the Waterfront Project, particularly when Stage I was completed. After what appeared to be a long communication breakdown, the Executive Director of the NT Branch of the National Trust, and the Convener of PLan, kept an appointment with the Darwin Waterfront Project management in their brand new offices overlooking the project.

Our particular aim that day was to seek certainty, particularly about the promised establishment of Goyder's Park to commemorate Darwin's First Settlement site. This was established by South Australia's Government Surveyor, George Goyder who arrived near Fort Hill in the Moonta, in 1869, to survey the layout of the town of Darwin (then called Palmerston), and three other smaller ones. Their camp below the present Government House became a built settlement, parts of which were in use for about one hundred years. Close to the beginning of the Waterfront Project, an agreed site was established for the future public park. This is shaded on official planning (SU) maps of the completed project. What is needed is to establish the ultimate exact size of the park.

Darwin as a capital city deserves a large enough park on its First Settlement Site for outdoor events and enjoyment, not just a token scrap left over after developer's aspirations have been met. The park must be authentically sited, not be surrounded and overlooked by tall buildings, and have a perspective to Darwin Harbour where the first surveyors arrived. For the last two years, the National Trust has organised popular costumed re-enactments of this arrival on site. Contact the National Trust office for details of the 2010 Goyders Day re-enactment.

The Navy is already making calls on the Fort Hill area, cruise ship use is increasing, and these demands come on top of planned apartment developments. The people of Darwin will not be content with leftovers, as could be the case if negotiations about later project stages were to be done under pressure, behind closed doors, not involving the public and experts. The community is unhappy, as warned in the Consultant's Executive report, with building across the front of their treasured Darwin Escarpment, and unimpressed with artificial 'place making' efforts on the covered walkway along upper Smith Street.

A similar case is presently being debated in southern newspapers over the treatment of proposed public parklands in Darling Harbour Project. In that case an area of open public land 'left over' from development, appears to be an orphan in terms of responsibility. We ask the NT Government to give priority to the establishment of Goyders Park. Although the park will be laid out in later stages of the Darwin Waterfront Project, the NT Government should plan ahead, and openly consult now with the public, and the developers. The public can only be satisfied by a binding legal agreement, defining and guaranteeing the future location of Goyder's Park, and its minimum conditions, scope and size.