



Newsletter – April 2021

Friends of Lee Point (**FLP**) are a community-based group of Darwin residents campaigning to conserve Lee Point while encouraging the efficient use of land, infrastructure and services in Darwin. Please share your photos of Lee Point, send to: info@saveleepoint.org.au

The dry season is here with Darwin exceeding its annual average rainfall of 1723 mm. Total rainfall to 29 April was 1831 mm (source NT News). Some indicators of the dry season are dragonflies and departure of the migratory shorebirds.

Farewell Shorebird event at Lee Point (held Saturday 3 April)



Everyone (about 70 people) had a fabulous time at the free migratory shorebird farewell brunch at Lee Point on Easter Saturday.

It's now the end of April and most of the shorebirds have left. However, we hope to see them back at Lee Point in Aug-Sept.

A special thanks to those who donated to the Save Lee Point campaign.



Photo by Andrew Bell - Lee Point 3 April 2021

We also got to see some of the shorebirds in their "dressed to impress" plumage before they fly to the Sub Arctic (Siberia) to breed.

The Greater Sand Plover in the front here is still getting dressed.

Urgent planning needed for Lee Point

Planning Action Network Inc (PLAN) and Friends of Lee Point (FLP) are very concerned about the lack of planning for Lee Point, and launched a petition on the 22 April 2021. The petition calls on the NT Parliament to *place a moratorium on the current housing development proposal until the NT Planning Commission has developed a comprehensive Area Plan for the whole of Lee Point*. The on-line petition received close to 400 signatures from 22-30 April.



Photo Teresa Laird – Lee Point March 2021

Plan and FLP believe that the current housing proposal is short sighted and potential opportunities for ecotourism and recreational activities will be lost forever. They also believe it will lead to an urban sprawl next to Casuarina Coastal Reserve (CCR). CCR is the most visited reserve in the Territory with over 1M visits annually.

Lee Point encompasses Dariba Nunggalinya (Old Man Rock) and is on Larrakia country.

Many people (based on comments we have received) believe that bulldozing a significant portion of Lee Point will not be good for Darwin. If you have concerns about the current proposal to house thousands of people at Lee Point, please take action: sign the petition (if you haven't already), send your comments to the NT News Editor and your local member. The links are below:

PETITION – www.saveleepoint.org.au

NT News - fill out form at: <https://www.ntnews.com.au/news/opinion/letter-to-the-editor>
or email comments with your name and address to: news@ntnews.com.au

NT Parliament - for electoral email address (click on your local members name at LHS)
Link: <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/members/by-name>

Mangroves of Lee Point

Mangroves are salt-tolerant trees that have adapted to life in harsh coastal conditions. They provide a sanctuary/nursery for marine life, and are important for protecting coastal areas.

Stilt-root (Red) Mangrove

The Stilt Root Mangrove is a widespread and very common mangrove tree species along the entire NT coastline.

It is recognised by the numerous stilt or prop roots growing from trunk, and the leaves have a small spike at their end. This mangrove can grow in dense stands, especially along tidal creeks. It flowers and fruits year-round.

The long “living seed” is able to drop from the tree directly into the mud and start growing.

Mangrove worms are found in the wood and mudcrabs amongst the roots.

Ref: David Percival conversation, plus Glenn Wightman - Mangrove Plant Identikit of the North Australia's Top End.



Stilt-root mangroves at Lee Point (*Rhizophora stylosa*)



Stilt-root mangrove leaf

Lee Point and defence of Darwin

Lee Point played an important role in the defence of Darwin during World War II and Indonesian confrontation in the 1960s.

The Indonesian confrontation led to gun placements for sea and anti-aircraft defence, plus installation of (up to 8) Bloodhound missiles, at Lee Point.

The Bloodhound was a mid to high altitude Surface to Air missile, range 190km, max speed ~2700km/hr.

Lee Point ceased to be used for military purposes in the early 2000's.

Ref: Sid Mitchell, Aviation Spotters Online



Bloodhound missiles at the Darwin RAAF Base. These missiles were previously located at Lee Point.

Lee Point trivia (answers at bottom of page)

Darwin Cycads grow north of Hayes Creek and are endemic to the NT. They are classed as vulnerable because while locally abundant, less than 1% of them are in conservation reserves. The main threat to Darwin Cycads is land clearing.

Ref: NT Government: https://nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/208430/cycas-armstrongii.pdf

Q1. Lee Point has many Darwin Cycads, how long do they live for?

- A. up to 50 years B. up to 150 years
C. hundreds of years D. over 1000 years

Q2. When did Darwin Cycads first appear?

- A. 50M years ago B. 100M years ago
C. 200M years ago D. 300M years ago

Dinosaurs first appeared 230M years ago.



Darwin Cycads (*Cycas armstrongii*) at Lee Point

Planning for Lee Point (Part 3) – zoning plans

Part 2 (March Newsletter) finished with the NT Planning Minister being responsible for the NT Planning Scheme (NTPS)

Most land where people live is covered by a zone. Zoning plans control the types of use and development allowed in an area. For instance, land zoned “Conservation” means it cannot be used for housing or commercial developments.

Zoning plans are developed through extensive public consultation, and if approved by the minister, are included in the [NT Planning Scheme](#) (NTPS). They are arranged in the NTPS in the following order:

- regional land use plans - eg. Darwin regional land use plan
- sub regional land use plans – eg. Litchfield sub regional land use plan
- area plans – eg. Darwin inner suburbs area plan

The strategic land use planning for these zoning plans is normally undertaken by the [NT Planning Commission](#) (Commission) on the request of the planning minister. The Commission was established by the NT Parliament in late 2012. It exercises its powers independently, impartially and in the public interest, in accordance with the NT Planning Act 1999, and reports to the NT Parliament each year.

Next newsletter looks at strategic planning and area plans.

Until next time wishing you a cool, knock ‘em down season.

Answer Q1 - C Probably hundreds of years, some species of cycads have lived up to 1000 years.

Answer Q2 - D Around 300M years ago, cycads appeared before the dinosaurs.