

Save Lee Point – letters of support for period Apr 21-July 21

Letters of Support for Save Lee Point



Lee Point – March 2021

Compiled by Friends of Lee Point

July 2021

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This document contains (39) NT News - Letters to the Editor on Lee Point plus two other letters not supporting the development of Lee Point.

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2.0 Other Letters

1. Dr Amanda Lilleyman – Migratory Shorebirds, Nov 2020
2. BirdLife Top End – Letter of Support, July 2021

1.0 NT News letters

LETTERS

PROTECT LEE POINT

Darwin is blessed with a rich biodiversity that many other capital cities around the world would love.

So, let's make the most of it.

The most visited reserve in the NT is the Casuarina Coastal Reserve (CCR), which receives over one million visits a year.

Over half of CCR is in Lee Point. There is a magnificent opportunity to promote all of Lee Point as it has a rainforest, larger paperbark forests, bigger eucalypt forests and denser cycad stands than found in CCR.

Lee Point has a wonderful variety of habitats; from reef, beach, mangrove, bush and rainforest. It attracts about 80 per cent of the bird species found in Kakadu (approx. 4000 times larger in area). Currently there is a planned large housing development at Lee Point, but is this the best use of land at Lee Point and how will it promote Darwin? Housing should be located near jobs and transport.

Lee Point is a long way from the main centres of Darwin, Palmerston and Weddell (future city). Eco-tourism (before COVID) was the fastest growing sector of the world tourist industry, and is a valuable employer of Indigenous people. Lee Point is expected to become more accessible through the expanding use of electric bikes (and bike paths) in Darwin.

The idea is to turn most of Lee

Point (which is 90% government owned) into a reserve and promote its rich biodiversity.

This would create opportunities for longer visitor stays and recreation in Darwin, which would benefit the Darwin community and economy. It would also protect an irreplaceable natural asset for future generations.

Ian Redmond and Gayle Laidlaw, Friends of Lee Point

BUILD NEW JETTY

I've got an idea. Use the Nightcliff jetty as scaffolding and build a new one.

Lou, Humpty Doo

SAVE OUR PLANET

A study week from Cambridge, UK, found that just 3 per cent of the world's land remains ecologically intact.

Ray (Text the Editor, 16/4) is correct that overpopulation is contributing too much of the world's environmental problems.

More people, more consumption. But the way we farm, the way we commute, the way we warm our homes and drive our industries is also a factor.

The world's population is forecast to peak at 11 billion by the end of this century and renewable technologies can help us reduce our carbon footprint.

Reafforestation, regenerative farming and eating more plant-based food can help turn things around. But climate change denial, lack of scientific literacy and corrupt political parties beholden to donations from the fossil-fuel

DEVELOPMENT CONFUSING

Housing lots of people at Lee Point doesn't make sense. Here is the government spending a heap of money relocating CDU into town and then wanting a major housing development (which the Territory taxpayer will have to subsidise) out of town. They are spending heaps of money on greening up the city and then they want to bulldoze the bush at Lee Point. Makes sense?

Jess, Malak

NT News 2021-04-21

DON'T DESTROY LEE POINT

Readers' letters on 19th and 21st of April demonstrate concern over the future of Lee Point.

This important ecotourist destination is to become a new suburb, although 18 kilometres from Darwin CBD.

As knowledge of this development seems to be virtually unknown by the majority of Darwinites, it must be stated here that the project is to be funded by the taxpayer and ratepayer.

We are paying for the land clearing, for the bulldozing of primary forest, for the instalment of headworks, for the actual suburb construction, for the improvement of Lee Point Road, for the upgrade of Fitzmaurice Drive sewage treatment plant and the ongoing pollution of Buffalo Creek.

We are paying for the destruction of wildlife and green space at Lee Point. How much more of Darwin's natural environment will we allow to disappear?

I strongly urge you to visit Lee Point so you can see and appreciate what we are about to destroy.

David Percival, Ludmilla

NT News 2021-04-22

PROTECT ENVIRONMENT

The suburb of Muirhead has already impacted heavily on existing suburbs, sewerage ponds, traffic & roads & most importantly the mass destruction of bushland and environment.

What is left of this area should be protected for future recreation with the natural beauty of what this area has to offer.

Please think very carefully before ruining another pristine environment.

Sharon Ninham, Leanyer

NT News 2021-04-26

HANDS OFF LEE POINT

I'd like to bring to your attention the proposed plan to infill the rest of Lee Point with housing.

This needs to be fought strongly because this area is used by Indigenous people.

I'm especially concerned for the saltwater Indigenous people living in Darwin who rely on Lee Point for bush hunting for food from both land and sea.

If the area should ever be developed it should be for recreational purposes only (a links golf course would be amazing at Lee Point) where the public have right to roam (like The Old Course, St Andrews, Scotland), so our Indigenous brothers and sisters can still gather food, and the public can go walking, off road mountain biking and our flora and fauna can stay largely in tact.

Please encourage your readers and our members of parliament to oppose this plan!

The NT doesn't have any international standard golf courses.

The terrain at Lee Point would be ideal and if done as a Links course would require minimal amounts of water and would leave most of the flora and fauna untouched.

Plus a golf course of international standard would attract a whole new array of tourists to the NT.

Vicki Aitken, Rapid Creek

NT News 2021-04-28

PROTECT LEE POINT

The proposed urban development of Lee Point will extend the footprint of already extensive, low density, costly urban infrastructure, with catastrophic impact on natural environmental values associated with migrating shorebirds, terrestrial fauna including echidnas, and biodiverse native woodlands that have no currently recognised value in the planning act.

Dr Ian Hollingworth, Nakara

NT News 2021-05-01

SAVE LEE POINT

Please Save Lee Point.

Even though I am a Victorian I have been holidaying and visiting my sister in Darwin for the past 40 years. Lee Point needs to be saved as this area and the surrounding Buffalo Creek are some of the last beautiful natural areas close to Darwin for locals and tourists to enjoy. It was bad enough when they built Lyons. Lyons is more like suburbia down south than the relaxing NT lifestyle.

To go ahead with the Lee Point housing estate, this will destroy all the beauty of plants and fauna that this area has to offer which is not found elsewhere Australia.

Amanda Kerovic

NT News 2021-05-03

CHANGE WITH TIMES

Regarding proposed Defence Housing development, Lee Point.

We can't keep privatising public assets and putting up cheap shit for a quick buck for developer mates.

One-term thinking.

In a world where natural assets are diminishing and population is exponentially increasing, the dollar value of our natural assets increases accordingly.

Look at the prices in London or Singapore for housing in green zones.

Lee Point is not just critical city habitat for wildlife and migrating birds. Everyday humans of all ages and incomes and cultures use Lee Point to walk their dogs, play with their kids, go fishing.

These biodiversity hot spots for humans and animals have proven positive impacts on mental health, wealth and positive human interactions.

Darwin has grown three times the size it was in the era of rapid development post Tracy. Yet the same people from that era have the most say in Darwin's development today in 2021.

Times have changed and we have to change with the times. Public space is much more valuable than it once was and needs to be managed accordingly.

**Katherine Marchment,
Stuart Park**

NT News 2021-05-06

HELP SAVE LEE POINT

The proposed housing development at Lee Point is unnecessary, and will lead to traffic congestion, car dependency and emissions, considerable loss of habitat and wildlife, significant cost to the taxpayer, not to mention the additional pressure thousands of extra residents to the area will add to the already struggling Royal Darwin Hospital.

Lee Point is an irreplaceable environmental asset to the community and should be preserved as such. If any development must take place perhaps a visitors centre – much like the beautiful Bowali Centre in Jabiru – would enhance the precious jewel of our area.

Please go to go to www.saveleepoint.org.au and sign the petition to halt the destruction of Lee Point.

Clair Parkinson, Leanyer

NT News 2021-05-13

PRESERVE LEE POINT

I am very disappointed to hear that there is further housing development at Lee Point.

Land once used for Defence now turned into housing. Lyons and Muirhead is enough.

Really unhappy with the development of Lee Point and this sort of thing makes me wonder why we live here. Often little enough for kids to do and this land could be the jewel in the recreational crown of Darwin.

Not lost forever under housing that could equally well be built elsewhere.

The development is right next to a thin strip of land called Casuarina Reserve that is the most visited park in the NT and this should be extended.

Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone? They paved paradise and put in a parking lot.

David Laird

NT News 2021-05-15

LEAVE LEE POINT ALONE

Hi Ms Lauren Moss, As a constituent, I would very much like you to advise me on what your stand is on the development of Lee Point. I have been walking, biking, running, picnicking, and generally loving the area proposed for development for 45 years.

I note from your bio that is about 10 years longer than you have been alive.

One of the great joys I now have is walking and biking this area with my granddaughter.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if one day she could walk through the same bushland with her kids?

So it is kinda sacred to me. I don't want to see a pub there.

I don't want to see more dense housing and unit blocks.

For God's sake, please just leave it alone.

Anyway, hopefully I have gone off on a rant unnecessarily and you are a sensible lady who vehemently opposes this stupidity.

Your response would be greatly appreciated.

Steve Hancock, Tiwi

NT News 2021-05-17

LEE POINT CONCERNS

I am greatly concerned about the current proposal to house thousands of people at Lee Point and disappointed that members of government are not doing more to protect the natural areas of Darwin that many people move to Darwin to experience.

This development will have a major negative impact on the natural beauty, wildlife, future recreation and full tourist potential of one of Darwin's most important natural assets, Lee Point.

Development in this area will be a detriment to critical coastline habitat, that is important for migratory and local species, many of which are a large tourist draw.

A comprehensive Area Plan from the NT Planning Commission is necessary to fully consider the current development and ensure future developments at Lee Point will have long term benefit for the Territory.

There is a much better development location at Northcrest that is closer to community resources and prevents the dreaded urban sprawl, and does not impact vital wildlife habitat.

Cara Littlefair, Alawa

NT News 2021-05-19

USE OF LAND SHOCKS

Shocked to discover that a prime piece of real estate and community use land is being proposed as a housing estate for Defence housing when there is a great alternative closer to all of the defence bases.

Lee Point is a place of ecological significance and is used by the community for recreation. Save Lee Point.

Kylie McMartin, Wagaman

NT News 2021-05-21

SAVE LEE POINT

Regarding the NT News story – State Square redevelopment continues with \$30m for

carpark rip up and greenery.

Wow, in Darwin city the NT government, along with federal funding, is greening and activating the area next to Parliament House through the State Square redevelopment.

Up in the northern suburbs at Lee Point they are planning to bulldoze and brown and deactivate more land as part of the Defence Housing development.

Pity the poor Darwin locals who love the area. Did you know there are over one million visits to Casuarina Reserve each year?

A thin slice of land up the coast from Rapid Creek to Lee Point. The DHA with NT government blessing is going to continue to develop former Defence land for more housing right up to the edge of the reserve.

I don't expect the DHA bureaucrats to really care what's best for Darwin.

Surely those in power in the NT government who live here could see that there is a unique opportunity to conserve a green oasis forever, for everyone who

lives here in our northern tropical capital. It not like we have that much coastline that's easily accessible to Darwin and there are over one million visits a year already to Casuarina Reserve.

It doesn't make sense for the last remaining land to go under bulldozer, does it?

The NT government is making a terrible blunder if they allow it to go ahead. If you are concerned about this please write to your member of parliament.

David Laird

NT News 2021-05-22

implement VAD laws, it should be very clear to whatever party wins the next federal election that the ban on VAD laws imposed on the territories must go.

People in the NT and ACT need to make sure they get that message to every single MP and candidate as the election draws closer.

David Muir, Chairman, The Clem Jones Trust

PRESERVE LEE POINT

The proposal to clear coastal vegetation at Lee Point is a poorly conceived one and should be stopped. Surely it is better to preserve coastal reserve rather than denude the coastal region further. Coastal vegetation occurs in bands parallel to the beach – mangroves, dunes, vine thicket forest, etc and form the best natural barrier to surge tides and similar events.

The plan seems to continue the practice of clearing vegetation in an area at right angles to beach thus stripping the zone of its natural protection.

Given the likely increase in storms and surge tides as climate changes surely it makes better sense to create new housing south and east of Palmerston, especially if for defence personnel.

This may reduce traffic into Darwin and perhaps developers could look at using degraded areas and unrestored mineral working sites for housing; especially those sites on higher ground.

Sadly there are plenty to choose from. This would provide the added benefit of enhancing the

first view of Darwin's outskirts from the many aeroplanes that bring tourists and investors to the city. We should at least try to stop this pillage of our environment and leave something pleasant for the next generations.

Peter Waggitt

LEAVE LEE POINT ALONE

Lee Point development ... shame developers shame.

Why on earth would you want to destroy one of the most valuable, scenic, environmentally important sites around Darwin to put more housing that isn't needed? Answer GREED. I've been walking and riding the great trails around Lee Point since 1994 as have many.

I know some who are no longer with us that would be turning in their graves if they knew what was proposed for Lee Point.

Plenty of room for expansion elsewhere like Berrimah Farm (Northcrest) development and why not get a move on with Weddell? Please don't wreck Lee Point.

DR, Fannie Bay

EDUCATION SHORTAGES

I would like the NT Education Minister to answer the following questions truthfully.

1. Katherine High School staffing situation. Principal has resigned, mass resignations of staff, parents who can afford to are sending their children interstate to boarding school. Remaining children are being neglected and attendances are poor. When is the

SAVE OUR HABITAT

The Sunday Territorian's (May 16) informed article about the black-footed tree-rat did not mention any relocation of the species from Lee Point, where the bulldozers are revving up as you read this.

In fact I have seen no information from the developers about the relocation of the primary forest, the habitat mosaic, the 10,000 plus visiting shorebirds, the 250 bird species, the mammals, the reptiles, the insects or anything else you can think of.

We know Australia is the land of land clearance, the land of species extinction, but how can the

Northern Territory government just sit on its hands and allow this particular development debacle to go ahead?

The 800-house project could be built anywhere, but no, it has to be sited in Darwin's most important environmental site of Lee Point.

NT government, where is your moral responsibility to us, to future generations and, indeed, to the planet?

David Percival, Ludmilla

NT News 2021-05-26

SAVE LEE POINT

Planning for Lee Point. I strongly urge the Northern Territory government to reject the current housing proposal (land clearing) by DHA at Lee Point.

This development will have a major negative impact on the natural beauty of the area, wildlife and people's enjoyment of the area. The proposed development does not fit the Australian Governments' Smart Cities Plan because housing is not located near jobs and transport. Nor does it align well with the current NT Planning Act objectives; some of which are:

- to ensure strategic decisions reflect the wishes and needs of the community – very few people I

have spoken to agree with the proposed development.

- to protect the quality of life of future generations – most people believe it will affect their quality of life.

- to promote sustainable development of land – this development does not encourage the efficient use of land, infrastructure and services and will lead to higher long term costs for the Territory taxpayer.

Traffic congestion and noise is already a problem from the developments at Lyons and Muirhead. Housing thousands of people at Lee Point will exacerbate the already congested roads for the residents of the northern suburbs. Government has an opportunity to sustainably promote Darwin through the natural beauty of Lee Point, but instead it chooses to devalue Darwin.

Shame on the NT government.

Gayle Laidlaw, Tiwi

NT News 2021-05-31

HOUSING PLAN 'CRAZY'

Reply to Darren Karma (28/5).

Darren, the location of this Lee Point development is crazy, as far as possible from the CBD, apparently signed off by Tollner when there are other sites available, eg old Berrimah farm.

This site is special for conservation, just a few square miles but it has 80 per cent of the birds of Kakadu.

It also has forest that doesn't exist elsewhere in the Darwin area, big trees etc – all due to be bulldozed. Frankly, it was an area that was expected as possibly a

defence area against Japanese in WW2, then Indonesian invasion in the 80s – well, so a half hidden sign says. So why is the area not a Defence zone of history, of tourism, of memory? And just because the land is 'owned' by someone doesn't mean anything can be done with it!

Rob Wesley

NT News 2021-05-31

PROTECT LEE POINT LAND

Darwin residents now have a "last chance" tourism opportunity right on their doorstep.

More than 100 people turned up at the site last Thursday to lament and hopefully prevent the destruction of more than 130ha of Darwin's remaining accessible natural bushland for the Lee Point DHA (Defence Housing Australia) development.

While a magnificent osprey looked down on the proceedings from its eyrie on the telecom tower several hundred feet above, the arguments against the impending destruction of its environment

went on below. Most were compelling reasons to stop destroying the flora, fauna and spaces that make living in Darwin so attractive.

The public meeting was organised by The Planning Action Network and Friends of Lee Point with details on their websites.

Two questions have arisen,

How can a such a long, complex, expensive governmental planning process by so many presumably well-intentioned people result in such an unwise, shortsighted and destructive decision?

What remaining natural green spaces are next to be consumed by urban development?

Wild carers like myself see daily the damage and suffering caused by motor vehicles, dogs, cats, barbed wire, discarded fishing gear, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, poisons, pollution, and human and inhuman activity.

But the greatest problem facing threatened wildlife is the change, degradation and destruction of natural habitat and the breeding and feeding opportunities it provides.

Australia leads the world in land clearing, which in turn leads to another Australian world best – species depletion.

The proposed 800 new dwellings will house several thousand people, and add 1000 motor vehicles, 500 dogs and a similar number of cats to the area.

I'm sure the demographers and statisticians could provide more accurate figures.

The consequences of this, despite soothing homilies from the EPA, politicians and planning authorities, will be significant.

Bulldozing more than 100ha of native bushland will destroy every living thing in the food chain that at present supports the incredible diversity of wildlife therein.

Tourism and recreation potential will go with it.

It is telling that the logo in the promotional material produced for the Lee Point development includes the exquisite red-necked avocet, which doesn't actually frequent the area.

The migrating sanderlings also used will soon be severely challenged by human activity in their present environment.

A final irony, the emotive advertising images which promote the development are the very things that urban sprawl destroys.

So why not visit the development site soon? It will be your last chance.

If we wish to continue to enjoy the incredible bird life in our city, which is second to none in the world, we must protect its remaining habitat and not destroy it.

Graham Kirby, Nightcliff

US 'WAR BASES'

I was pleased to hear this week acting US ambassador Mike Goldman's claim (in The Australian newspaper) that it "just makes sense to forward deploy" US war stocks in Australia.

Now the cat's out of the bag, we can set aside the irrelevant

The community loses valuable bush land at Lee Point so Natasha and Labor Party lose my vote forever. What a shame job this development is. Now and in the future bush land recreational areas close to the city and suburbs will become more important but this government doesn't care. What a complete lack of vision on their part.

Rob, Rapid Creek

LEE POINT DEVELOPMENT WILL HAVE BIG IMPACT

As a birdwatching guide living in Darwin I took few of my clients to Lee Point and Buffalo Creek. Most were from the USA and in general they weren't interested in seeing shorebirds (apart from the odd species such as Terek Sandpiper). Participants in my PhD on American birders, asked a question on what birds they liked to watch also tended to put shorebirds last. Mangrove birds as well as other taxa, we could see more easily elsewhere. But for local and interstate birders Lee Point was and is somewhat iconic. And of course it is very popular with other users as Fifi Darcy points out (NT News, May 29). But destruction of habitat around Darwin is not new, and was a major reason why in 2004 I moved to Palmerston, and took my clients with me.

Loss of Lee Point as they know it impacts not only active users. Like the levelling of various trees and particular sites around town it can result in a location's loss of identity, a "sense of place." I began to read up on this topic as a

Darwin City Council alderman in the 1980s and as a social scientist it continues to be one of my interests.

Anthropologist Marc Augé refers to such sites as "non-places" (1995), and Darwin is fast becoming a placeless landscape, full of elements similar to those found elsewhere in Australia, houses and gardens, high-rise hotels and big shopping malls, and neat little grassed parks.

Presently, it's probably not so important to government to heed the wishes of locals and protect Lee Point. But the loss of such places does reduce future options for example, for tourism and local recreation. And for established residents who thought Darwin would be their forever home, the loss of places such as Lee Point may just change their minds.

**Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow,
Darwin River**

FINCH RETURN

The recent report over the weekend of juvenile Gouldian Finches at Lee Point may indicate the first breeding record of this beautiful and highly protected species in Darwin for several years.

It would also underline the fact that another environmental impact study should be conducted before any destruction commences on the site and that this study should properly consider climate change as well as the great number of environmental issues.

Of the many criticisms raised at last week's on-site meeting, under the shade of some of the tallest trees in Darwin, the one most

heard was that the development just did not make sense. Why are we destroying this important environmental asset so suitable for locals' and ecotourists' quality of life to make a minimal block size suburb for temporary postings and leaseings that is so far from the CBD? Does the economy always have to destroy the environment?
David Percival, Darwin

NT News 2021-06-03

RE: KEEPING LEE POINT AS LAND FOR ALL

Lee Point development: Removing natural Darwin attractions, our life-support systems, and continuing to expand the size of size of Darwin (which is already massively sprawled at 11sq km for its meagre population of fewer than 150,000) is clearly against the public interest, but our government considers it to be in the Party's interest. This is exactly the type of problem that arises from having only one day of democracy every three years, with all decisions made by the elected aristocrats in the interim. We need to find a way for the interests of all residents to be the main priority.

Greg. Parap

NT News 2021-06-03

NO MENTION OF LEE POINT

Great letter from Eva Lawler listing the ALP support of environment matters. The letter no doubt sparked by the feedback she has been getting over the NT govt allowing the destruction of valuable and irreplaceable country at Lee Point, which funnily she doesn't mention. All we want is for her, Gunner, and the NT govt, to re-look at this project to see if the truth of our arguments outweighs the steps taken or the grand masters who make them.

Lee Bird, Howard Springs

NT News 2021-06-07

PREPOSTEROUS PLAN

Clearly from the numbers of people who sign petitions, write to NT News, and attend protest meetings, there has not been adequate consultation about the proposed development at Lee Point. The CLP began this preposterous idea but Labor has had the ability to can it for many years. If they don't act now to stop it, Lee Point will be to Labor what the unnecessary destruction of the Hotel Darwin was to the CLP.

Pat Dry, Anula

NT News 2021-06-07

HYPERCRITICAL CLAPTRAP

In reference to Eva Lawler's letter in Saturday's paper, what a load of hypercritical claptrap. Eva and the Labor government have signed off on the destruction of a huge chunk of natural bushland. We don't have any land like this left so close to the city. It's an important recreation and nature reserve which should be left undeveloped for Darwin residents to enjoy. The letter from the so called Minister for Environment is total BS. The

minister should hang her head in shame for a crime against nature and all Darwin residents.

Rob Brooks, Rapid Creek

NT News 2021-06-07

BIRDLIFE TO LOSE HOME

In reference to David Percival's letter "Birdlife in danger" of February 2021.

I feel so bitterly sad and helpless for our birdlife.

It looks like the development at Lee Point is going ahead.

The natural habitat of our bird and wildlife will be lost forever.

I came to Darwin in 1998 because of its open spaces and unspoilt beauty. I call it home.

However, over the years I have seen the changes. These natural areas are getting chipped away and we will surely lose our precious flora and fauna.

I was at the site yesterday. High above on top of the mobile tower is a huge nest.

It's the nest of the osprey. She's been nesting up there for years.

Any day now she will be ambushed. The roar of engines, the heavy wheels, the steely teeth of chainsaws will crush and devour her home, our home.

Betty Lum, Alawa

NT News 2021-06-08

RAINFOREST NOT AT THREAT

Please, can we put an end to the orchestrated daily dose of codswallop being put out by the Lee Point development protesters.

The development area on the Casuarina side of Lee Point Road is a degraded, abandoned WW2 defence area, fully fenced until only a few years ago and utterly devoid of valuable flora or fauna.

In contrast, the coastal rainforest which sits between the development site and the beach is exactly what the protesters wax poetic about. But it is not under threat. Have a look at the plans then visit the site. Although DHA haven't helped themselves by putting a photo of the beach on the website, the beach and adjacent rainforest escarpment are not part of it.

ACA Jingili

NT News 2021-06-09

SAVE LEE POINT

Housing thousands of people at Lee Point doesn't make sense.

Lee Point is a long way from the Palmerston and Darwin business districts and away from the main public transport routes. This means more people need to drive and drive further.

How does housing people at Lee Point help reduce car emissions?

Cutting down thousands of trees at Lee Point isn't going to help with climate change problems either.

I thought the NT government was committed to taking action on climate change.

Housing at Lee Point is unnecessary and doesn't make sense. It's time for a rethink.

Jess, Malak

NT News 2021-06-15

SICK OF HEARING ABOUT IT

THE Lee Point bleaters fail at every twist to acknowledge that the land is privately owned and that a private owner is entitled to develop the land. Give it a break!

Anon

NT News 2021-06-16

LETTERS

LEE POINT DEVELOPMENT

Many members of the Darwin community have, like myself, been thoroughly impressed by the number, and quality of the Letters to the Editor, concerning the importance of the rich environment of natural vegetation currently threatened by a bulldozing building development on the Lee Point Peninsular. These letter writers deserve thanks, in letting the public know, not personal abuse. An apology is due to those letter writers.

This is largely Defence land, set aside since World War II when used for military purposes, and left uncleared. In consequence, the threatened land is now covered with dense self-sustaining vegetation systems. It is home to thousands of animals, insects and birds both within, and adjoining the narrow Casuarina Coastal Reserve strip. Precious Gouldian Finches have been seen recently.

Rangers and dedicated landcare folks work endlessly, using their local environmental knowledge to keep the bush alive and healthy. You may not be familiar with this area, but many families are, and use it for both active and quiet recreation. It is a great place to be, giving enormous pleasure. Bird watching, particularly of seasonal shorebirds, is a favourite activity for locals and tourists.

The NT Government has recognised its potential by planning for tourism here on Lee

Point. However, with 3000 new residents squeezed into 800 Defence Housing Australia homes, and the sustainable bush environment gone, the chances of seeing any shorebirds, or happy tourists is probably lost.

The irony here, is that Northcrest estate at Berrimah is still being established on land cleared long ago for the experimental farm there.

Now a totally unidentified letter writer has spitefully claimed in our Letters to the Editor, that whoever owns land, has a right to do what they like with it. Fortunately this is not true. Everyone must follow due process, and the public must be heard.

Margaret Clinch, Brinkin

CLIMATE CHANGE INACTION

Get ready to groan – again – if you are one of those people who think that those of us who are concerned over government inaction on global warming are nuts. You probably have – in your opinion – much more urgent things to worry about.

Sorry – but I believe the scientists. Latest reports indicate that Arctic ice is melting to an unprecedented extent – and this is going to affect weather patterns all round the world.

And those effects are highly unlikely to be beneficial. We have already had a foretaste of some of them, and those were relatively mild examples.

If we do nothing significant to reduce emissions from fossil fuels,

LEE POINT CLEARLY IN PUBLIC INTEREST

In answer to the unsigned letter of June 16, the land proposed for the Lee Point development is not privately owned.

The land is owned by Defence Housing Australia, a branch of Australian Defence. This is part of the Australian government, which is us – the taxpayers.

In this respect the Australian public own the land and are the developers as well; unfortunately there are no economic, social or

environmental benefits to the public from this development. Also Lee Point is unsuitable for housing Defence personnel because of the physical travelling distances to their actual places of work.

As for the large number of letters against the development printed in the NT News, this only demonstrates the growing concern about environmental habitat destruction in the Top End.

David Percival, Ludmilla

NT News 2021-06-19

BETTER LEE POINT OPTIONS

I am appalled that a major development like the one proposed for Lee Point could have been approved with so little publicity and public consultation. Worse still, is the fact that there are much better alternatives that don't seem to have been considered.

I am in the tourist industry.

People come to Darwin for the natural wonders of the Top End. Destruction of so much of one of the best natural areas in Darwin will inevitably have detrimental effects on tourism.

It's not just tourism. Putting a massive development on Lee Point like the one proposed will increase traffic to the point where it will have a negative impact on everyone who lives in the area. Putting it at the old Berrimah Farm would avoid this.

The list of reasons to put the new housing elsewhere goes on and on. It's time that the proposal was reconsidered in the light of facts rather than someone or some government department's convenience.

If it goes ahead as planned, it will be one more reason for long-time residents who enjoy the Darwin lifestyle to consider moving elsewhere.

Russell Willis, Millner

NT News 2021-06-23

LETTERS

LEE POINT CONCERN

As a long-term resident of 27 years in the electorate of Wanguri, I am very concerned about the proposed development at Lee Point, and even more so, now I have seen the overall concept plan from DHA.

Without boring you with a long, convoluted argument regarding the affect this will have on traffic, increased CO2 emissions, and considerable loss of wildlife habitat and wilful environmental damage, of which I am sure you are more that aware of, I strongly suggest someone in government makes themselves aware of the criminal code 1899-sect 469 Wilful Damage, before you allow this development to go ahead.

The Chief Minister's argument that it is a fait accompli is another example of a spineless politician, unwilling and unable to stand up to the construction industry here in the NT.

You are after all the elected GOVERNMENT here, are you not, and as such you have been elected to enforce the will of you constituents.

I also am extremely concerned about the size of the proposed blocks in this development plan.

A 400sq m block in Darwin is just totally ridiculous, and necessitates building a house made of concrete resembling a fortified bunker, which is totally dependent on airconditioning, as there will be zero airflow in and around these

structures. Re. Muirhead. I kept quiet about the development of Lyons, and even Muirhead but this approval, which quite frankly smacks of corruption at the highest level, is just going too far.

Surely we have learnt our lessons after the creation of Muirhead, of which, I believe most Territorians are very familiar.

Further to my concerns, is the prospect of a developer building houses around and on the asbestos polluted mound in stage 1 of the development plan. The said mound being the burial site of the WWII radar station which was demolished surreptitiously while the labour government was in power.

It will be interesting to see the reaction of prospective buyers of these minute sections, especially the ones in stage 1, when they realise they are going to be building on a polluted site.

I realise there is a need for more housing in the Darwin area, but why do you have to allow developers destroy this most pristine section of costal land which we as residents have enjoyed for many years, and which helps to makes Darwin, Darwin.

Brian Shells, Wanguri

FINE REFUNDS

I'm amazed at the Commissioner's attitude over the fines that have been paid. As he calls it, if you have paid the fine you have admitted guilt! You have admitted guilt and paid the fine on the assumption the ticket was issued using a calibrated piece of

LEE POINT MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

To the Minister for Environmental Disasters.

With only 1hr of exercise time and a limit of 5km travel from home, the preservation of Lee Point for recreation has never been more relevant to Northern Suburbs residents.

I've never seen so many people using Lee Point tracks and trails. After being locked down all day, having the natural bushland of Lee Point available for mental and physical unwinding is essential. This area now, more than ever, should be preserved.

It's about time the so-called minister for Environment and the Chief Minister grew a backbone and stood up to ScoMo and the DHA developers and stop the destruction of this important area.

This current Covid outbreak highlights more than ever the importance of this area and the necessity to protect it not only now but for the future.

Coronavirus is going to be with us for the foreseeable future, areas like Lee Point will only grow in importance not only for environmental reasons but for Darwin residents' mental and physical health.

The so-called minister for Environment and Chief Minister should be tarred and feathered for allowing the destruction of this area to go ahead.

Do what you're elected to do, you pair and fight for the people of Darwin, it's never too late.

Rob Brooks, Rapid Creek

NT News 2021-06-30

NO MORE DEVELOPMENT

Why do we need more development at Lee Point?

There is so many more suitable places for Defence housing.

Lee Point has one single road in to a pristine peninsula and native wildlife refuge.

The midges will smash the new residents, they'll stay indoors and pump aircon all year in their ghetto-style Defence housing with such tiny yards you can't even grow a tree for shade.

Surely it makes more sense to build the housing closer to the barracks at the old Berrimah farm and leave Lee Point for recreation and the endangered migratory birds.

Thank goodness we have crocodiles or it would look like the Gold Coast in no time.

Sarah, Wulagi

NT News 2021-07-05

PROTECT LEE POINT

The need for DHA property developer to destroy a large area of Lee Point for a housing development is totally unnecessary. There are other more suitable places that could be used that don't require the same environmental destruction.

Defence members defending this country only to have developers desecrate it just doesn't make sense.

The Chief Minister and his Minister for environmental disasters should be protecting this

area as a wildlife refuge and recreation area for all Darwin residents to enjoy.

Rob Brooks, Rapid Creek

NT News 2021-07-07

2.0 Other letters of Support

1. Dr Amanda Lilleyman letter, 16 Nov 2020 on migratory shorebirds.

Charles Darwin University
Ellengowan Drive, Darwin, Northern Territory, 0909

To Whom it may concern,

Value of Casuarina Coastal Reserve for Migratory Shorebirds in Darwin Harbour, Northern Territory

The coastline of the Casuarina Coastal Reserve in Darwin's northern suburbs is one of the most important areas for migratory shorebirds in Darwin Harbour. The stretch of beach from Sandy Creek around Lee Point and through to Buffalo Creek provides a home for up to 10,000 shorebirds of at least 20 species every year. These shorebirds breed in the northern hemisphere in northern China, Russia and Alaska and then travel through eastern Asia to Australia and New Zealand every year. The birds arrive in Australia from August and stay through the austral summer season before departing north again in March and April.

Migratory shorebirds (Charadriiformes) are protected under Commonwealth legislation, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and under several international bilateral agreements. Australia and its territories have obligations to protect these shorebirds and the habitat that they use.

There are seven species of migratory shorebird listed with a conservation status of concern under the EPBC Act, and all seven species occur along the Sandy Creek and Lee Point beaches. Sandy Creek and Lee Point – Buffalo Creek regularly support internationally important numbers of the critically endangered Great Knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*) and the vulnerable Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*).

A key threatening process to migratory shorebirds is disturbance from humans and dogs. Disturbances can cause birds to use energy that they would otherwise use as fat stores for migration. Increased disturbances to birds can lower the condition that birds are in and may mean that birds are not in their best condition to migrate thousands of kilometres. It is vital that Australia provides safe havens for these birds when they are in Australia. This is an opportunity for Darwin as a global city to lead the way in shorebird protection.

I do not support increased housing near Lee Point as there is the potential that with additional housing and an increased human population at Lee Point there will be increased recreational use of the beaches and thus increased disturbances to shorebirds. We must protect these birds and the habitat that they use.

Kind Regards,



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Save Lee Point – letters of support for period Apr 21-July 21

2. BirdLife Top End Letter, 4 July 2021 on migratory shorebirds.



4th July 2021

Re: Support for the Save Lee Point campaign

BirdLife Top End shares some concerns about the development of Lee Point with the Save Lee Point campaign, and supports calls for a comprehensive management plan for the area.

As advocates for birds and their habitats, BirdLife Top End, a branch of BirdLife Australia, is concerned about the potential impact of 800 new homes in the proposed Lee Point Darwin development on migratory shorebirds and woodland birds that call the Lee Point region home.

Lee Point is an internationally important site for the Critically Endangered Great Knot, the Endangered Red Knot and the Vulnerable Greater Sand Plover, as well as a nationally important site for the Critically Endangered Eastern Curlew and the Endangered Lesser Sand Plover. These species are listed as such under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)* due to observed population declines. Buffalo Creek beach (1.4km northeast of the proposed development site) at Lee Point is a nationally important site according to commonwealth legislation for migratory shorebirds¹, and is the most important high tide roost in the Darwin Harbour region for thousands of other shorebird species.

The Lee Point area is already subject to multiple forms of human disturbance. The presence of both leashed and unleashed dogs, including in the dog exclusion zone near Lee Point, is a common and particularly invasive form of disturbance for shorebirds. The proposed Lee Point Darwin housing development indicates that a minimum of 1500 additional people will be moving into the area, which will impose significant additional disturbance pressure on shorebirds at Lee Point and Buffalo Creek, especially at high tide and during the NT wet season when shorebird numbers are at their highest.

Coastal development and disturbance are the biggest threats to migratory shorebirds. Global wetland habitat has declined by 35% over the past 40 years, which puts approximately a quarter of wetland dependent species, including migratory shorebirds like the Critically endangered Great Knot or Eastern Curlew, at risk of extinction². Analysis of data from Australia has revealed that 12 of 19 migratory shorebirds species have declined significantly since the 1970's³. Coastal habitat loss in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway is well-accepted as the primary driver of declines. Remaining intact coastal habitat where large numbers of shorebirds are found, as is the case of Lee Point, is

¹ NT Environmental Protection Authority. (2018). Assessment Report 88 Lee Point Master-planned Urban Development: Defence Housing Australia.

² Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. (2018). Global Wetland Outlook: State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People. Gland, Switzerland: Ramsar Convention Secretariat.

³ Clemens et al. (2016). Continental-scale decreases in shorebird populations in Australia. *Emu*. Vol. 166: 119-135. <https://doi.org/10.1071/MU15056>



therefore critically important for supporting migratory shorebird populations. At high tide, when much of Darwin Harbour's tidal flats are inundated by seawater, shorebirds have limited habitat options and may waste valuable energy if forced to move between roost sites as a result of disturbance. This can be particularly harmful in the lead-up to their long annual migrations, which commence around February-April.

Furthermore, incremental loss of green space and remnant vegetation in urban environments leads to reduced abundance and diversity of woodland birds^{4,5}. In 2019, the endangered Gouldian Finch was [recorded in the Lee Point area](#), which has recently been followed by a [sighting of juveniles](#) on 30th May 2021. This suggests that there may be breeding activity in the area by this species, of which was not specifically considered in the initial Environmental Impact Statement. This new information about an endangered species warrants careful consideration and further investigation, to ensure the proposed development at Lee Point Darwin does not have a significant impact on a threatened species without planned avoidance mitigation.

Here in Darwin, we are very lucky to have access to remnant vegetation in our urban areas, such as the bushland at Lee Point. This provides opportunity for those living in an urban environment to interact and connect with our environment through recreational activities like bushwalking, birdwatching and bike riding. Connection to our environment through such activities increases the likelihood that people will engage in conservation-directed behaviour⁶, while also benefiting peoples' physical and mental well-being⁷. Loss of a significant sized area of native vegetation in the urban environment will likely strike a blow to those that frequent the area for both physical and mental well-being.

Given the concerns we have regarding migratory shorebird disturbance and incremental green space loss, we would like to see a comprehensive management plan for the Lee Point area developed in consultation with all stakeholders. This plan should carefully consider the impacts that this or future developments would have on coastal and woodland habitats, and consider the strategic importance of the area for both Darwin residents and threatened species, including specific acknowledgement of the special regional importance of the area for shorebirds. A plan such as this would serve to maximise the physical and mental benefits from access to natural habitat for people across Darwin,

⁴ Threlfall, C.G., Williams, N.S.G., Hahs, A.K. & Livesley, S.J. (2016). Approaches to urban vegetation management and the impacts on urban bird and bat assemblages, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 153: 28-39

⁵ Palmer, G.C., Fitzsimons, J.A., Antos, M.J. & White, J.G. (2008). Determinants of native avian richness in suburban remnant vegetation: Implications for conservation planning, *Biological Conservation*, 141(9):2329-2341

⁶ Geng L., Xu J., Ye L., Zhou W. & Zhou K. (2015) Connections with Nature and Environmental Behaviors. *PLOS ONE* 10(5): e0127247.

⁷ Mardie Townsend, M. (2006). Feel blue? Touch green! Participation in forest/woodland management as a treatment for depression, *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 5(3): 111-120,



including in any new development, ensure the best outcomes for the various threatened species that might be impacted, and would ensure that strong environmental management in the area can continue long into the future, for future generations to benefit from. We welcome the opportunity to work with any organisation committed to ensuring positive outcomes for shorebirds and woodland birds in the Lee Point area, and the wider Top End of the Northern Territory.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brittany Hayward-Brown".

Brittany Hayward-Brown

Conservation and Advocacy Officer, BirdLife Top End