

**To: The Secretary Public Accounts Committee**

**Re: Funding of Rugby League facilities in Darwin.**

I have read the detailed 2012 proposal by the Northern Territory Rugby League, stakeholders, endorsement by the ARLC and found the arguments compelling, logical, and rational at a cost I understand of \$16.5 million. I find it incomprehensible that at the whim of a planning minister whose tenure is limited an agreed plan should be replaced with a 'pet project' with no public input, no EIS, no consultation with those most effected, no planning approval where the bulldozers are already destroying swathes of irreplaceable bush land, animal habitat and green corridor in an area subject to flooding, tidal surge and sever drainage problems. We don't even know what we are destroying.

'Developments' fitting this description are familiar to Darwin residents but this one seems more unintelligent than most.

I am fervently opposed to the spending \$20 million of public funds on a 'pet project' when austerity budgets and treasures argue the case for reduction of public spending for the following reasons.

- The Richardson Park redevelopment is not mentioned in either of the mid suburb area plans. It is a 'pet project' with little rationale.
- Marrara is the established centre for Darwin top-level sports. A popular public venue. Road access is easy; parking satisfactory and public transport efficiently services major events.
- Marrara is central to Greater Darwin's population and distant from suburban residential areas. It is fully established with all the skills of grounds maintenance and administration personnel.
- The first tenant of town planning is to maintain or enhance the current amenity of the area being developed. Placing such a facility in the suburban setting of Ludmilla will destroy the amenity of countless residents and the necessary expansion of Ludmilla Primary School.

The list is incomplete but I would like to register the feeling of frustration and futility in trying to be gainfully involved in the planning our city and its future under the present regime. My skepticism turns to cynicism and finally to disbelief.

I hope the Public Accounts Committee can return some measure of credibility to the government's attempts at planning, and make the minister accountable to the ratepayers, taxpayers and citizens who are passionate about their city's development.

Good Luck.

Yours sincerely  
Graham Kirby