

Stolen mob return to Garden Point

Members of the stolen generations in Darwin recently returned to an island off the coast of Darwin where they were taken as children.

A resilient group, including members of the Garden Point Association Committee in Darwin, saw as a 'healing journey' a return to Garden Point on Melville Island where they were raised by the Roman Catholic Mission.

Garden Point Association Committee's Cherry McLennan said the trip allowed members to spend quality time together, relive fond memories and reconnect emotionally in a special place.

"This has had a positive impact on the way that they can, together, come to terms with the apology and acknowledgement of the plight of the stolen generations made by the Rudd Government earlier this year," McLennan said.



Above: Garden Point members reunite on Wulawunga Beach and below right: A mass was conducted at the beach

The group visited familiar landmarks, gathered bushtucker including sugarbag and mussels, and fished and camped on the beach at Wulawunga.

The trip was organised jointly by the Garden Point Association Committee and Danila Dilba Health Service's Emotional and Social Wellbeing Centre.



Toilet on sacred site investigated

Contractors for the Federal Intervention are being investigated by the Northern Territory's Aboriginal Protected Area Authority for building a pit toilet on a sacred site in Numbulwar.

The Northern Land Council held a meeting in June at Numbulwar, 600kms southeast of Darwin, to explain the process to Traditional Owners.

The toilet was dug by a contractor with NT Link, a company employed as part of the Federal Intervention into Northern Territory Aboriginal communities. It was then reported by Traditional Owners, and subsequently investigated by the Northern Land Council and AAPA.

Traditional owner, and NLC project officer, Bobby Numggumajbarr, said the site was culturally significant, and off limits to local children.

"This ground is very, very important to us," he said.

The operational commander of the intervention taskforce Major General David Chalmers said if proven, the behaviour of the contractors is 'appalling'.

AAPA, which administers the Sacred Sites Act, has passed on evidence to the NT Justice Department to consider if any prosecutions are warranted.

Bob Nunthabala and Langina Nung-gumajbarr at the sacred site



Card broadens shopping choices

The federal Human Services Minister Joe Ludwig has said about 500 Northern Territory businesses have expressed an interest in accepting the new welfare debit card.

More than three-quarters of welfare recipients in prescribed areas of the Northern Territory are now having half of their payments quarantined.

The measure was one of the Commonwealth intervention's most controversial. Senator Ludwig said the pin-protected card replaces the store cards for major retailers and is being rolled out over the next month. Many businesses had complained the former system took customers away from them to the big retailers.

Senator Ludwig said stores will have to pass an accreditation process before they'll be licensed to accept the new welfare debit card.