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## Brisbane land claim sparks Aboriginal ownership row

### WA election set for Feb 6

West Australians will go to the polls on February 6 after a short election campaign.

Announcing the poll date on January 7, Premier Carmen Lawrence pledged the ALP's campaign would be clean and positive, based on issues, not gimmicks.

She said the timing of February 6 was traditional and not the result of pressure from the Keating government, which is set to go to the polls itself in the first half of this year.

Prime Minister Paul Keating welcomed the poll announcement and said Dr Lawrence should be given the chance to continue governing.

But he gave no hint how the date would affect his own election timing.

The Liberal-National Party Coalition, which was formed only a few months ago, needs to win five seats with a 2 per cent swing in order to gain government.

When an Aboriginal group claiming to be descendants of the Mullenjarli people indicated in the closing days of 1992 that they intended to make a claim of the Central Business District of Brisbane, not only did it draw the predictable angry response from the white sector, but two Aboriginal groups also said the claimants had got it wrong.

The South East Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Legal Service vice president Sam Watson said the claim involved Queen Street which runs through the heart of the Central Business District and out to the mouth of the Brisbane River.

The area included business property and landmarks such as the Story Bridge and the Myers Centre in the city mall.

Mr Watson was quoted as saying: "The Mullenjarli are a very strong cohesive group of people who have been talking for a long time about land claims, but it was on the backburner until the Mabo decision came through.

The group used the Mabo High Court decision based on 'native title' to make the claim.

Media reports said about 300 people claiming to be descendants of the Mullenjarli people had indicated they would make their claim in 1993, The

By KAREN MORAN

International Year of Indigenous People.

At the time, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Mr Robert Tickner, said the claim had 'less than a snowflake's chance in hell of ever being taken in any way seriously by the courts'.

The first public Aboriginal reaction came from the former Senator Neville Bonner, who said the Mullenjarli claimants had no right to claim another tribe's land.

Mr Bonner said he was the oldest living male member of the Jagera tribe.

On a less public platform, the Anderson descendants of the Ipswich area said both Sam Watson of the Mullenjarli group and Senator Bonner had got it wrong.

Mr Bonner said the land traditionally belonged to the Jagera tribe, and said no Aborigine had the right to claim another tribe's land.

With reaction from the Aboriginal sector, Mr Watson announced that the Mullenjarli claim would not go ahead at this time, but in the wake of the claim conflict has arisen over tribal boundaries of the Jagera tribe, its tribal groups and dialects.

With these disputes arising over rightful ownership Mr Bonner was invited to meet with the Andersons to discuss the matter at the weekend, but he did not attend.

On Saturday (January 9) a group of Anderson descendants gathered at Namatjira Park in Redbank, a suburb of Ipswich.

A spokesperson said this informal gathering was significant as it was held at the birthplace of Robert Anderson, a now deceased tribal elder of the Ugarapul tribe, claimed by this group to be one of the original tribal people of the disputed area, which included Brisbane.

Mrs Gertrude Moran, of Eaglby, who is one of 14 descendants of the late Robert and Sarah Anderson, formerly of Ipswich, has taken a stand on the issue, supported by her three surviving sisters, Elsie Geebung, Gladys Graham and Mona Parsons, all of Ipswich, and their only surviving brother, Raymond Anderson, of Eaglby.

"We will not follow the rebels, for they want money, we want our culture," Mrs Gertrude Moran said. "We want our sacred sites preserved for our grandchildren and future generations.

"We have lost much, and it has been destroyed and stolen, but what we have we want to keep."

"We may be living now in this

society, but we have our Dreamtime, and this is our only connection with our past."

"Our family is noted as being the true tribal people of the area, the Ugarapul people, our totem is the frog. We have the knowledge and the history of the area."

This has been supported by Mr Leonn Satterthwait, anthropology museum director of the University of Queensland.

"There is noted anthropological evidence and knowledge of the Ugarapul tribe, this is noted by landmarks and sacred sites, which are more than just lines on a map," Mr Satterthwait said.

"I have no doubt that the Andersons, descendants of Robert and Sarah, are the original tribal people of the Ipswich and West Morton area — the Ugarapul tribe."

### Three die in plane crash

The bodies of three people from the Aurukun community who died after a light aircraft crashed on the western coast of the Cape York Peninsula were recovered by police rescuers overnight.

The badly burned bodies were flown by helicopter to nearby Weipa.

The pilot of the Cessna 206 sent out a mayday call shortly before the crash about 12.30pm on Saturday saying he was making a forced landing 16km north-west of Aurukun.

The Civil Aviation department co-ordinated an immediate search of the area with five light aircraft and the crashed plane was located at about 7.30pm about 32km south of Weipa.

The Civil Aviation Authority said the plane was apparently suffered engine trouble and had crashed into a heavily timbered area.

The Cessna, owned by the Aurukun Aboriginal community, had left Weipa to make a short flight to Aurukun.

Investigators from the Bureau of Air Safety were expected to reach the site on Sunday afternoon to examine the wreckage.

### I LOVE MY MUM!



Ruby Langton, 4, loves her mum, Marcia Langton. The pair were photographed at a conference of community representatives who met in Canberra to discuss the Reconciliation process. A comprehensive report and pictures of the conference will appear in the next edition of the Koori Mail.

NEXT WEEK  
RECONCILIATION MEETING  
IN CANBERRA  
☆ ☆ ☆  
GORDON FAMILY REUNION  
AT BARYULGIL, NSW

**HAPPY NEW YEAR:** 1993: The International Year of Indigenous Peoples — our year