

Fiery land rights protest

From ANDRE HEKS
in Darwin

LAST FRIDAY aboriginal land rights activists in Kulaluk, Darwin, threw firebombs on a truck and hit a worker and a policeman with a dog chain.

The estimated damage to property is over \$1600. The police are pressing charges against the aboriginals, and the federal minister for the Northern Territory, Kep Enderby, called for an urgent report on the incident.

The background to it is this: Venturin Construction Pty Ltd is developing land at Kulaluk as an extension to an existing subdivision. The Larrakeyah aboriginal tribe claims land rights to the area.

On thursday of last week aboriginals pulled out the road marking pegs on the project. The police were called. Aboriginals continued to pull out pegs in front of them. On thursday night they removed the pegs again.

On friday eight aboriginals started to march towards subcontractor Paul Croker, his men and a Greek worker, Salis Karaceorciu. Croker said that the aboriginals were approaching the workers in single file carrying the Gwalwa Daraniki flag. (The Gwalwa Daraniki is an aboriginal land rights group which supports a claim of the Larrakeyah tribe to the area).

They threw five kerosene firebombs into Croker's truck, followed by lighted matches. As the workers fled Karace-

orciu was struck twice with a dogchain. When the police arrived one of them, too, is alleged to have been struck.

The aboriginals said that the firebombing was part of their struggle for land rights. Croker estimates the damage to his truck at more than \$1000. Equipment worth more than \$600 was damaged as well and the interior of the cabin was burnt out.

Police have charged three aboriginals over the incident. One was charged with two counts of aggravated assault, assaulting police, hindering police, resisting arrest, and drunkenness. Two others were charged with disorderly behavior. Sergeant Bill Goedegebuure, head of the Darwin CIB, says more charges are likely.