

## IRON GATES SUBMISSION CUSTODIANS

My name is Simone Barker nee Wilson and I am a traditional Bandjalang Custodian - appointed by passed elder, my father, Lawrence Wilson who originally filed and won our Native Title Claim.

I am highly insulted by the Iron Gates development proposal, and have repeatedly tried to convey this to the consultants. The development imposes a residential area over one of our most precious and meaningful places, the Gumigurrah site that was our people's Winter camp site, the crossing point for our people and ceremonial site where brides were exchanged. It is also the site where the massacre took place, where our ancestors were raided at dawn by a punitive party and subsequently massacred while fleeing. Within the Iron Gates development I know of four burial sites that seem to be ignored by the last Heritage study that took place.

Whenever I go to the site I think of our forebears, of the beauty and spirituality of their lives that was so deeply respectful of Nature and our laws. If this proposal goes ahead in its current form it will make it impossible for us to feel good about our situation because we will be always reminded by white people living in a short distance from our own camp site and how it appears that the white people have now won and totally dominate our most precious traditions. Never mind that we now have native title rights over our land – that would mean nothing if our site is overwhelmed by this development and the visual impact, noises, pets and motors of a residential area.

We totally disagree with the Heritage study's conclusion that the current buffer is sufficient wide or well conserved to protect cultural values at the midden site and ongoing natural values. It is completely insufficient both for our needs and the needs of nature. We demand that the ongoing heritage study corrects this mistake and records our objections in detail.

The buffer needs to be wide enough that no houses or yards can be seen from the opposite shore and there are to be no jetties or boat access ramps on the development site. Management of this buffer should be as a natural area, with no mowing or formal walking tracks. Dogs or cats should not be allowed in the new development. The proposed reserved area inside the proposal should be connected to the surrounding vegetation so that our animals can move in or out.

Other Bandjalang representatives are entitled to their opinion. Without agreement with the Custodians their views need to be treated with caution. Many Bandjalang individuals, including those who currently run the registered Native Title body, have sadly been separated from their true culture and have no link with traditional Bandjalang decision making or representation.

I also would like to add that in the past the courts have ordered the developer to remove the roads, drains and bridge but this did not take place.

Bandjalang Custodian

Simone Barker