



Marion Scrymgour
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

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Don't Mention the War – It's Only a Confrontation

A little known chapter in the Northern Territory's history will become a permanent reminder for Territorians thanks to a new display at Darwin's popular Lee Point.

Environment and Heritage Minister Marion Scrymgour said the interpretative signage was recently erected and briefly details Australia's conflict with Indonesia.

"While many people who live in or visit the Territory know about the 1942 bombing of Darwin, very little is mentioned of the conflict with Indonesia that followed 20 years later," Ms Scrymgour said.

"Malaysia's formation in 1963 was a catalyst in the Indonesia-Australia conflict because the move was seen as an affront by Indonesia's first president, Sukarno, who saw it as a British ploy to maintain a colonial influence over the region.

"Sukarno ordered attacks against Malaysia and a cautious Australian government sent troops to the area, resulting in 23 Australians killed and 108 wounded on operations in the conflict.

"Lee Point was selected as part of Australia's northern defences in 1963 when 121 Light Anti-Aircraft (LAA) was formed in Adelaide to defend Darwin against any incursion by the Indonesians.

"A dozen of these positions were constructed for the crews and their 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns as well as a battery headquarters, crew camps, communications and a POW enclosure just in case."

Despite continued training by the gunners and a number of alerts, the Indonesians avoided Darwin and any threat was negated in 1965 when Indonesian army leaders, including General Suharto, staged a coup against Sukarno, ending the policy of *Konfrontasi* and the nation of Malaysia was recognised by Indonesia in 1966.

"The military presence established during Confrontation was also withdrawn from Darwin leaving little to remind us of a little known period in our military history.

"With this interpretative signage it is hoped visitors to the area will gain added appreciation and understanding of the important role it played in our history."

Ms Scrymgour said people travelling to Lee Point will find the new signage located just before the Lee Point caravan park on the right-hand side of the road.

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