

GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Media Statement – March 19th 2024

GAC corrects recent reporting by Energy Resources of Australia Ltd

The Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC), represents the Mirarr Traditional Owners of the former Ranger Uranium mine, the Jabiluka mineral lease area and parts of Kakadu National Park.

Mirarr are concerned by repeated references in ERA Annual Reports to options to extend the Jabiluka Mineral Lease. The reporting inaccurately describes the position of the Mirarr.

Mirarr cannot see any basis on which ERA could be granted an extension of the Jabiluka mineral lease. Protection of globally significant cultural heritage, insurmountable risks to the environment in Kakadu National Park, an absence of any feasibility studies or proposals, the publicly reported dire financial circumstances of ERA and the prohibitive costs of rehabilitation demonstrated at the adjacent Ranger site are all factors that stand in the way of an extension application.

Mirarr concerns have been made very clear to ERA in writing as early as April 2022. After the release of the Annual Report 2022, Mirarr through GAC and the Northern Land Council requested ERA correct their reporting. It is disappointed that the reporting in the Annual Report 2023 continues to mischaracterise the position of the Mirarr and GAC.

ERA has not commenced discussions with either Mirarr or GAC for an application for extension of the Jabiluka Mineral Lease. Statements that there are discussions are wrong.

The only discussions between Mirarr and their representatives and ERA have been confined to preparations for the expiry of the mineral lease in August 2024.

The primary concern of the Mirarr Traditional Owners is the dire financial circumstances of ERA. On their own public reporting, ERA expects to be at least \$2BN short in meeting the costs of rehabilitation of the former Ranger Uranium site.

“How could anyone consider giving or extending a mineral lease to a company that is \$2BN in the red? No other mining company would seriously apply for a mineral lease with this balance sheet.” Thalia van den Boogaard, GAC CEO said this week.

The financial situation of ERA is also a significant risk for rehabilitation works at Ranger. Mirarr are appalled that the total cost of rehabilitation is still uncertain and that ERA is reporting the need to raise over \$1BN from shareholders to avoid running out of cash this year.

“We can’t trust ERA. Right up until 2020 they said they would have Ranger all cleaned up by January 2026. Now they say they don’t know how long it will take.” says Senior Traditional Owner Yvonne Margarula. “I’m very worried. We can’t trust this company, very soon they will have nothing left.”

GAC and the Mirarr welcome the Commonwealth government assurances about its responsibility for completing the rehabilitation at Ranger and for protecting the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park.

Next generation Traditional Owner Corben Mudjandi said “It’s a big problem that ERA is out of money. It’s time for the government to step in. Mining has finished and now the government has got to protect Kakadu National Park.”

