

BEN ELTON JOINS AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL

CLAN LEADER WHO BRINGS U-MINE RESISTANCE TO BRITAIN.

Friday 21 August

Ben Elton, well-known British comedian will be joining Ms Yvonne Margarula, Senior Traditional Owner Mirrar Land in Australia's Kakadu National Park, in a press conference in London, 9.30am Friday 21 August. Elton will speak in support of Ms Margarula's fight against the proposed uranium mine, known as "Jabiluka", by Energy Resources of Australia.

The Mirrar people's fight against this development is currently Australia's highest profile campaign, crossing issues of land rights, conservation and anti-nuclear sentiments. A recent poll shows nearly 70% of Australians opposed to Jabiluka. Already thousands of people have travelled to the far north of Australia to stand with the Mirrar in opposition to the development.

The Mirrar people have opposed uranium mining in Kakadu for twenty years. Their right to veto the development of the currently operating Ranger Uranium Mine was extinguished by the Australian Government and has led to severe and negative social and economic impacts on the Aboriginal community.

The Mirrar have occupied the land of Jabiluka for 40,000 years and hold title to it through the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) 1976. Energy Resources of Australia's interest in Mirrar land is currently under dispute in the Federal Court of Australia. The agreement that the mining company currently holds is also in dispute as it was signed by the Northern Land Council and the Mirrar believe that the Council failed to fulfil their obligations to traditional owners.

The delegation, including Jacqui Katona, Executive office of Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation and Christine Christophersen, Project Officer are now appealing to the international community for support.

Spokesperson for the delegation Jacqui Katona, said today:

"Kakadu National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage list on cultural and natural criteria; one of less than twenty places on earth recognised in this way for its' unique qualities. Mining has offered no benefits to the Mirrar people, instead the proposal to expand uranium mining threatens cultural and social devastation for the Mirrar. The Jabiluka project would result in the accumulation of an additional 20 million tonnes of radioactive tailings on site and the destruction of an ancient culture."

"We are aware of the increasing problems experienced by other countries around the world with nuclear waste. The Australian Government has failed to recognise

the worldwide trend against nuclear power and toxic waste. Ultimately the people of Britain should not have to take responsibility for the Australian Government's poor economic decision to open a new uranium mine."

For the Mirrar this issue focuses fundamentally on their human rights and their cultural future. They believe that there is no justification for the sacrifice of their rights and the future of their community for short-sighted economic reasons in a world incapable of securely and safely storing waste produced by the nuclear industry.

**PRESS CONFERENCE: FRIDAY 21 AUGUST 1998 at 9.30am VENUE:
PILOTLIGHT, 15 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3ED**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jo Heath at Politlight on: 0171
396 7414 After hours Lyndon Ormond-Parker on 0171 460 7280 or Jacqui Katona
on 0061 417 814470 in London.**