

GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Media Statement April 3rd 2024

Traditional Owners welcome ERA's back-flip on Ranger rehabilitation

Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC), representing the Mirarr Traditional Owners of the former Ranger Uranium mine and the Jabiluka mineral lease area, have welcomed the announcement today that uranium miner Energy Resources of Australia has appointed majority shareholder Rio Tinto to manage the complex, high-stakes Ranger Rehabilitation Project.

CEO of GAC, Thalia van den Boogaard, said the announcement was a long overdue recognition of the total inability of ERA to manage the rehabilitation project, as well as underscoring the failure of the federal Department of Industry, Science and Resources to guide Ranger's rehabilitation.

"Mirarr are pleased that the ERA independent board committee has finally admitted that ERA has lost control of the Ranger Rehabilitation Project and will hand over management of it to the major shareholder Rio Tinto," Ms van den Boogaard said. "Just two months ago, in January this year, ERA announced it was, "moving to a self-perform project execution model which is expected to be finalised by 30 June 2024". That announcement itself followed an earlier announcement in 2023 that heralded ERA's implementation of an Integrated Project Management Team in partnership with Bechtel. This is the third change in less than 2 years."

In November 2022 Mirarr were alarmed to learn that the Department of Industry, Science and Resources had allowed the company to draw down on the limited Ranger Rehabilitation Trust Funds held by government in order to prop up ERA's finances.

"Mirarr Traditional Owners lost all confidence in ERA's capacity to clean up Ranger when they had to ask the Department for \$56.8M from the rehabilitation trust fund. That fund is intended to be the safety net. At the time ERA had announced that more than \$1.2billion would be needed. The drawdown leaves only \$481million in the trust. That request showed us ERA was in trouble. This is a step in the right direction as a major operator with expertise like Rio Tinto is needed to turn this around." Ms van den Boogaard said.

Next generation Mirarr Traditional Owner Corben Mudjandi said: "While it's good news that Rio Tinto will be managing the clean up at Ranger, ERA is still in financial dire straits. Its also disappointing that one of the few things that will be left under ERA management is the Jabiluka Mineral Lease. Its time for both the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments to pay attention to Kakadu and dismiss the notion that ERA is in any state to hold on to a mineral lease anywhere, let alone over dual World Heritage listed country that a generation of Australians fought to protect."

Contact: Kirsten Blair 0412 853 641