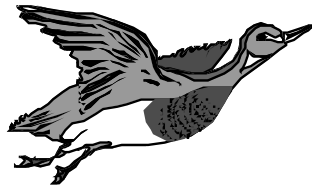


# GUNDJEIIMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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**Media Release**

**15 November, 2014**

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## **Indigenous Rangers Key To Addressing Threats To Kakadu's Future**

The Federal Government can act quickly to prevent further degradation of Kakadu National Park by mobilizing Indigenous rangers to manage the World Heritage Area using both traditional knowledge and modern science, the Mirarr Traditional Owners said today.

"The threats to Kakadu National Park's World Heritage status identified in a major new international report by the international conservation union IUCN underscore the need for the Australian Government to contract local Indigenous ranger groups to undertake active land management of their traditional lands," CEO of Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation for the Mirarr people, Justin O'Brien, said.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) report released this week lists Kakadu's status as of 'Significant concern', meaning that 'values are threatened by a number of current and/or potential threats and that significant additional conservation measures are required to preserve these values over the medium to long term'.

The report highlights climate change and threatened species as key concerns to Kakadu, although other threats, including mining, also exist.

"The joint management of Kakadu by traditional owners and the Australian Government must evolve to its next logical step and support traditional landowners managing their land," Mr O'Brien said.

"The Indigenous ranger program is recognized as a world-leading model of conservation management and is a great success story for Indigenous people."

"There are now four Indigenous ranger groups across Kakadu, with the potential for up to six to take on a range of land management activities. These groups must be resourced to undertake this work. It is now established that working on country can directly contribute to improved Indigenous health and wellbeing, in addition to providing a sustainable economic base for the region.

"Rather than receive this report as criticism of its management of Kakadu, the government should use it as impetus to negotiate a new deal with traditional owners to better protect the park from increasing challenges on a range of fronts. The traditional knowledge and resources of Indigenous landowners should be unleashed in a new deal for the park.

"Kakadu is too precious to Australia and the world to allow its rich biodiversity and cultural significance to steadily degrade and its standing diminish. Now is the time to act to begin turning the state of the park around."

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