

GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Media Statement - 25 November 2009

Mirarr welcome historic win-win proposed settlement at Jabiru

The Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, representing the Mirarr traditional Aboriginal owners of Jabiru, welcomes the Australian Government's proposed settlement of the Jabiru native title claim, describing it as an historic act of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Mirarr have long sought legal recognition of their traditional ownership of Jabiru, which was denied them in 1977 when the town area was excised from the Alligator Rivers Region Stage 1 land grant. This was done to prevent a 'veto' over the construction of the town necessary for Ranger's operation.

Lodged in September 1997, the Jabiru claim is one of Australia's longest running active native title claims. Its settlement represents a significant breakthrough for Indigenous people, business interests and government. The Mirarr receive recognition of traditional ownership, business receives much-needed security of tenure and the Australian and Northern Territory Governments establish certainty for the town's future.

The proposed settlement includes the grant of the claim area under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* to an Aboriginal Land Trust on condition that the town area of 13km² is leased for 99 years to the Executive Director of Township Leasing and the other two NT Portions leased to the Director of National Parks. Other elements involve the preservation of existing interests in Jabiru and providing for the town's future development. The entire claim area is to remain part of Kakadu National Park.

The proposal requires federal legislation to schedule the claim area as Aboriginal land and to facilitate the leasing arrangements. Discussions aimed at the finalisation of the proposed settlement will continue early into 2010.

The Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation acknowledges the support of Energy Resources of Australia in the Mirarr aspiration for legal recognition of their ownership of Jabiru. ERA has played a pivotal role in recent years lobbying both the Australian and Northern Territory Governments with respect to the settlement of the Jabiru native title claim via the appropriate recognition of the Mirarr as the town's traditional Aboriginal owners.

The Corporation further acknowledges the important role of the Director of National Parks, the National Native Title Tribunal, the Northern Territory Government and the Northern Land Council for their support of a mediated outcome to this matter.

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