

GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Media Statement - 25 February 2011

Mirarr welcome European scrutiny of Kakadu uranium mine

Members of the Mirarr clan – the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of that part of Kakadu that includes the Ranger uranium mine – have today in Queensland briefed a delegation of the European Parliament on concerns over the operations of Rio Tinto's Ranger Uranium Mine. Ranger has operated on Mirarr land at the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park for over 30 years.

The presentation took place against the backdrop of suspended production at Ranger due to concerns over heavy rains and flooding as well as new plans by Rio subsidiary Energy Resources of Australia to expand the mine using controversial and unproven acid heap leach technology.

High level international scrutiny is not new for Rio's Kakadu mine. In 1998 a European Parliament resolution called on the Australian Government not to proceed with the then proposed Jabiluka mine (since halted as a result of Mirarr-led campaign) and in the same year UNESCO's World Heritage Committee sent a scientific mission to assess the impacts of uranium mining on the World Heritage values of the Kakadu region.

"This international scrutiny comes at a critical time for the Mirarr and is very welcome. The ongoing operations at Ranger, combined with renewed pressure for expansion, threaten the natural and cultural values for which Kakadu is listed as World Heritage," said Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation executive officer, Justin O'Brien.

"ERA's current difficulties highlight the company's inability to safely manage its existing operations and casts serious doubts over its capacity to manage any expansion.

"European nuclear power is fuelled in part by Kakadu uranium. As long as Europe has an appetite for uranium, it is important that Europeans understand the problems uranium mining causes.

"We have asked the delegates to facilitate a dialogue which will ensure the cultural values of Kakadu are protected," Mr O'Brien said.

Today's briefing follows a series of meetings in Brussels in 2010 between Mirarr representatives and members of the European Parliament.

Mirarr and their representatives today further outlined their key concerns including: mine waste and water management, contamination threats and the long term social and cultural impacts of mining.

"We welcome the fact that international attention remains focussed on the protection of the World's Heritage Kakadu region and the well being of those for whom this unique area has been home for many thousands of years," concluded Mr O'Brien.

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