

GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



Media Statement – 7 April 2011

Mirarr resolve against uranium mining strengthened by Fukushima

Yvonne Margarula, the senior traditional Aboriginal owner of that part of Kakadu that includes the Ranger uranium mine, has this week written to UN Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon to express the Mirarr people's sympathy and sorrow with the people of Japan following the recent earthquake, tsunami and subsequent nuclear crisis at Fukushima. Ms Margarula has also reiterated Mirarr opposition to further uranium mining at Kakadu, restating her people's opposition to the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine.

The Ranger uranium mine, operated by Rio Tinto's Energy Resources of Australia (ERA), was imposed on Mirarr land over 30 years ago. TEPCO, the company which owns and operates the Fukushima plant, is a long-time customer of ERA.

In her letter to the Secretary-General, Ms Margarula states her hope that, "individuals, families, communities and the nation may rebuild their lives. We also hope for a speedy resolution to the ongoing Fukushima nuclear emergency." She also comments on Kakadu uranium as the likely source of at least some of the radiation problems being experienced at Fukushima.

"Given the long history between Japanese nuclear companies and Australian uranium miners, it is likely that the radiation problems at Fukushima are, at least in part, fuelled by uranium derived from our traditional lands. This makes us feel very sad," Ms Margarula's letter reads.

In her correspondence Ms Margarula recounts Ranger's history, underscoring the unconscionable conduct of Australian authorities in overriding Aboriginal opposition to the mine and thereby undermining the legitimacy of Aboriginal land rights. She also restates Mirarr opposition to Jabiluka, writing that, "We Mirarr remain opposed to Jabiluka's development; the Fukushima incident only strengthens our resolve."

Ms Margarula ends her letter with a statement of solidarity and support, "with all those people across the world who see in the events at Fukushima a dire warning of the risks posed by the nuclear industry. This is an industry that we have never supported in the past and that we want no part of into the future. We are all diminished by the awful events now unfolding at Fukushima."

Her letter comes as production at Ranger remains suspended due to persistent water management problems and environmental risks posed by radioactively contaminated water. There is now over 10 million litres of contaminated water on site at Ranger, upstream of Aboriginal communities and internationally recognised wetlands. In addition, ERA is scheduled to soon publish an environmental impact statement as part of its application to introduce acid leaching of uranium at Ranger.

For further information contact the Gundjeihmi Corporation 0427 008 765