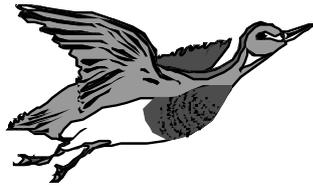


# GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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Media Statement – 6 November 2013

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## Traditional owners alarmed at Ranger uranium mine security breach

The Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) is alarmed by revelations that a potentially contaminated vehicle was able to bypass security and make an unauthorised exit from the Ranger uranium mine site last Sunday, 3 November. The Corporation, which represents the Mirarr Traditional Owners of the Ranger Project Area and much of the surrounding Kakadu National Park, was only informed of the incident by Rio Tinto's Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) days after the event.

GAC's Chief Executive Officer, Justin O'Brien, said: "This is a very serious incident which raises critical questions about the security of the Ranger uranium mine. We now know that it is possible to illegally remove material from the site. Uranium is a highly dangerous material and its transport is subject to strict international regulations. This breach calls into question Rio Tinto's capacity to safely manage this toxic substance.

"In our view this incident constitutes a breach of the company's mining authorisation. We are calling on the Northern Territory and Federal governments to commence an immediate investigation into how it occurred and the security implications it raises.

"Rio Tinto often asserts that Ranger is the most regulated mine in the world, but this is the fourth such contamination scare over the past seven years," Mr O'Brien said.

In 2004, the mine was forced to close and ERA prosecuted after uranium was found in the mine's drinking water and at the nearby Jabiru airport. Shortly afterwards a contaminated bobcat left the mine site without being adequately cleaned, possibly exposing local workers and children to radiation.

This week's incident comes as ERA seeks federal approval to extend Ranger's operational life by mining the so-called Ranger 3 Deeps deposit beneath the Magela Creek. This month also marks the tenth anniversary of a seminal report by the Australian Senate, which found an inadequate regulatory culture at Ranger and issued a raft of remedial recommendations. The GAC is currently undertaking an audit of the 2003 Senate Inquiry.

"This failure, coming on the back of other related radiation incidents over recent years, raises serious questions as to the viability of Ranger's R3D proposal and will certainly be factored into our thinking," Mr O'Brien concluded.

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