

# GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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## Media Statement

February 11 2020

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The Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, on behalf of the Mirarr traditional Aboriginal owners of the Ranger uranium mine and the Jabiluka deposit at Kakadu National Park provide the following statement for release today.

The Mirarr traditional owners are increasingly concerned about rehabilitation at the Ranger uranium mine site in light of the comments made today by Mr Richard Magides as a shareholder of Energy Resources of Australia (ERA). The reasons for decision of the Australian Takeovers Panel in examining the current renounceable entitlement offer have disclosed information that the traditional owners were not previously aware of. ERA has not approached the traditional owners about any dealings with future assets and in particular no approaches have been made regarding Jabiluka.

There has been no change in the Mirarr people's opposition to the development of the Jabiluka deposit and Mirarr still hold both cultural and environmental concerns.

The traditional owners do not regard the deposits at Ranger and Jabiluka merely as assets over which foreign investors might speculate. These deposits are located on Aboriginal land. The Jabiluka mineral lease contains sacred country with extensive galleries of rock art that it is of universal significance. In 2017, it was announced that Australia's oldest human occupation site, Madjedbebe, is located within the Jabiluka Mineral Lease. The site is of immense cultural and international scientific value.

In its submissions to the Takeovers Panel, Rio Tinto was correct to state that any disposal of the Jabiluka asset by ERA without the full consent of the Mirarr traditional owners would negatively affect the social licence to operate of the parties involved. Without community consent there should be no speculating about development of the deposit.

The traditional owners have been working closely with ERA since the execution of the Jabiluka Long Term Care and Maintenance Agreement in 2005. We have not seen any sign of a 'secret agenda' over the past 12 months as claimed by ERA minority shareholder Zentree Investments. ERA's need for funding for rehabilitation is, in the view of the traditional owners, critically urgent and significantly more urgent than the Takeovers Panel reasons acknowledged.

Our view is that the cost of rehabilitation of the Ranger site remains underestimated both as to financial cost and timeframe. Any uncertainty about the funding gap for rehabilitation is only uncertainty about how much more it is going to cost and who will be paying for it.

The Commonwealth government has the ultimate responsibility for rehabilitation at Ranger. Zentree Investments is a foreign investor who may not appreciate the genuine significance of both the heritage and natural values of Kakadu National Park which surrounds both Ranger and Jabiluka. All Australians regard these as much more important considerations for the future of Ranger than speculation about share prices and market prospects.

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