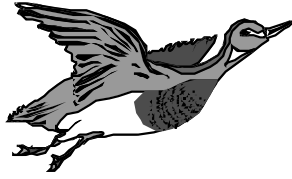


GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



**Embargoed until 12noon AEST 26/06/2021
Media Statement - June 26 2021**

Jabiru in Mirarr hands at long last ***Aboriginal title secures Jabiru for investment***

The Mirarr Traditional Owners are very happy and proud that the long fight for recognition of traditional ownership at Jabiru has culminated in the grant of freehold title under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*.

“This is a great day for Mirarr people,” said Mirarr Senior Traditional Owner Yvonne Margarula. “The handing back of Jabiru to Mirarr recognises our land rights here and gives us economic independence. We are excited for the future of Jabiru and for the future of all our people,” she said.

The Minister for Indigenous Australians, Hon. Ken Wyatt MP, the Minister for the Environment, Hon. Sussan Ley MP, the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Hon. Michael Gunner MLA, and the chairperson of the Northern Land Council, Sammy Bush-Blanasi, joined Mirarr, other traditional owners and the community to celebrate the milestone.

The fight for land rights at Jabiru commenced in 1978 when the town was built on what was then Crown land without the involvement of Traditional Owners. The senior Mirarr elder at the time, Toby Gangale, is the father of today’s Senior Traditional Owner Yvonne Margarula. In 1998, Ms Margarula lodged the Jabiru native title claim which was decided by the Federal Court in 2016 after one of Australia’s longest-running native title matters.

At an early stage, the Mirarr confirmed their wish that Jabiru should become Aboriginal land and have a bright future as the centre for regional services, tourism and for all Kakadu.

The Mirarr acknowledge the role of the NT government in providing critical support early by becoming the key partner in Jabiru Kabolkmakmen Ltd in July 2019 (JKL). In August 2019, the Northern Territory government and the Traditional Owners were also joined by the Commonwealth of Australia and the mining company Energy Resources of Australia Ltd in signing the landmark Memorandum of Understanding on the Future of Jabiru and Kakadu. The Mirarr are proud of their leadership in securing this significant commitment to the future of both Jabiru and Kakadu.

“Today marks an historic milestone in the economic transition of Jabiru from a mining economy into a world leading tourism centre, acknowledging, respecting and celebrating local Aboriginal culture. Mirarr look forward to welcoming more people to Jabiru, to experience country and cultural heritage,” said Justin O’Brien, CEO of Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC).

While acknowledging the historic importance of the land grant, Mr O’Brien said the challenges ahead for Jabiru should not be underestimated. “The most significant challenge for Jabiru has been created by ERA., which has failed to engage in a timely manner on the town’s transition. Unfortunately, ERA houses are not ready and there are at least 70 ERA houses now vacant. The performance of ERA and its majority shareholder, Rio Tinto, will be judged in coming months,” Mr O’Brien said.

The cost of ERA’s outstanding housing works at Jabiru is estimated to stand at some \$25M, based on condition assessments conducted by the Australian Government in April 2020.

For further information: Kirsten Blair 0412 853 641
Video and images will be available after the event [here](#)