

# GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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## Media Statement – 1 September 2023

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### **Jabiluka's permanent protection a key test of Australia's heritage laws**

Mirarr Traditional Owners of the Jabiluka site at Kakadu National Park have angrily responded to the announcement yesterday by Energy Resources of Australia that it will seek an extension of the controversial Jabiluka mineral lease. The lease, which expires in August next year, covers a sacred and dangerous site, hundreds of ancient rock art galleries, an intricate web of intangible heritage sites, as well Australia's oldest human occupation site, Madjedbebe, dated to 65,000 years BP.

"We do not support a longer lease at Jabiluka" Mirarr Traditional Owner Corben Mudjandi said today.

"Three generations of Mirarr: my grandfather and his brothers, my father and aunties, and now my cousins and I have said many times that Mirarr will never say yes to mining at Jabiluka. Why can't ERA hear us?"

"ERA needs to stop messing around with our cultural heritage, let the Jabiluka lease expire in August 2024 and focus on cleaning up the mess at Ranger," he added.

Mirarr Traditional Owners welcome the approach from majority shareholder Rio Tinto which downgraded the value of Jabiluka in February this year, acknowledging that the deposit will never be mined.

"August 2024 is a major milestone in the story of Jabiluka" said Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation acting CEO Thalia van den Boogaard.

"The Federal and NT Governments need to act now, before the lease expires, to protect this site of internationally significant cultural heritage."

"The NT Government has the power to protect Jabiluka by reserving it from mining under NT law. Minister Manison should do this now as a first step towards long-term protection of the Jabiluka site," Ms van den Boogaard said.

The new threat to Jabiluka comes as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which opposed Jabiluka's development in the 1990s, holds its 21st general assembly in Sydney this week.

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