

# GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



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## Media Statement 24 April 2024

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### ERA plans put Jabiluka in jeopardy and Kakadu at risk

Mirarr Traditional Owners of the Jabiluka mineral lease are protesting today at the Annual General Meeting of Kakadu uranium miner Energy Resources of Australia (ERA) in Darwin. The relationship between the Mirarr and ERA has been in tatters since last month when ERA applied to extend the Jabiluka mineral lease until 2034 despite announcing a funding crisis. ERA claims extending the lease is to protect internationally significant Mirarr cultural heritage at the site, while vocal shareholder Willy Packer continues to spruik mining.

Senior Traditional Owner Yvonne Margarula said: “ERA has been lying. They say they have never heard from us about not mining Jabiluka. These people are the only ones in the country who don’t hear us. We are here again today, now listen to us again. Jabiluka is sacred country and we will always say no.”

Joining Yvonne and other family members at the protest outside the meeting, Mirarr Traditional Owner and nephew to Yvonne Margarula, Corben Mudjandi, said “ERA can’t ignore us today. We are here to call on the government to permanently protect Jabiluka and Kakadu. The risks are enormous. ERA cannot be trusted.

“We had a very positive meeting recently with the NT Chief Minister. She understands how urgent this is now. We have asked for this area to be protected under Territory law the same way as Nitmiluk is once the lease ends in August this year. I feel confident the Territory government will step up here and end all this uncertainty.”

Many of the Mirarr at today’s action were involved in the protests of the late 1990s and early 2000s when the word Jabiluka became a household name. Some, including Corben and his brother Davis, were not yet born – this issue has existed for their entire lifetimes. During the 1998 blockade, over five thousand people travelled to Kakadu to stand with Mirarr and say no to mining at Jabiluka. Thousands also sent postcards of the now-famous Stop Jabiluka “hand symbol” to Yvonne pledging their support.

Today Yvonne has brought just a fraction of the original postcards to remind ERA, Rio Tinto and the Territory and Federal Governments that if Jabiluka is put at risk with a questionable extension, there are thousands of people across Australia and around the world ready to support Mirarr again.

“We will not stand by and let ERA play games with Jabiluka. ERA is finished. Now it’s up to the government to decide what happens next. If we need people to stand with us again, I know they are there. Jabiluka is sacred, I want to protect it for all of us, Jabiluka will not be mined” Yvonne Margarula concluded.

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For photos and background, contact: **Kirsten Blair 0412 853 641**