

# GUNDJEIHMI

ABORIGINAL CORPORATION



**ERA**

Energy Resources of Australia Ltd

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## Media Statement – 1 March 2012

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### **ERA and the GAC agree on important water initiatives**

- *New independent surface water study for Ranger uranium mine*
- *Decommissioning of Jabiluka interim water management pond*
- *Collaboration signals strengthening relationship between Mirarr Traditional Owners and ERA*

In a move signalling an improvement in relations, the Mirarr Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Ranger Project Area and miner Energy Resources of Australia Ltd (ERA) today announced the establishment of an independent surface water study at the Ranger mine and the decommissioning of an interim water management pond on the Jabiluka lease.

The Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) and ERA have been working closely together on a range of matters of mutual interest, including those announced today.

The independent Ranger surface water study, modelled on a similar groundwater study two years ago, will examine the impacts, monitoring and reporting of surface waters flowing from the Ranger mine. An independent water expert is expected to be appointed within weeks.

ERA and the GAC have commenced discussions on plans for the progressive rehabilitation of the water pond on the Jabiluka lease. The involvement of the Mirarr Traditional Owners is vital to ensure that the land is rehabilitated in a culturally appropriate manner.

Executive Officer of the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, Justin O'Brien, said: "for many years we have expressed concerns about the Ranger mine and its impact on Mirarr people and their country. We are pleased that ERA is listening and is working together with us. These initiatives reflect the Mirarr people's overriding concern to protect their country".

"ERA has listened to Mirarr concerns about the proposed heap leach process, they have done some good work on monitoring and improving the management of waste water from the Ranger mine, they are supporting some of our business initiatives. We look forward to working better together in the future.

ERA Chief Executive, Rob Atkinson, said, "the relationship with the Mirarr is of great importance to us and I am very pleased that ERA and the GAC are working collaboratively on these important projects. We will continue to listen, share our plans and work together."

"We are also working closely with the GAC on finalising the Ranger mine suite of agreements. The current negotiations are progressing very well. The futures of both ERA and the GAC are intertwined and these agreements are vital to both our organisations."

Mr O'Brien said, "In due course we will sit down with ERA and discuss with them their future plans. Mirarr want to ensure that they are recognised as landowners with primary responsibilities and rights to look after the environment and their people, and to have a say about any future mining on their land. We retain an open mind regarding future development on the Ranger Project Area and will judge each project on a case by case basis on its merits. We look forward to the results of further exploration undertaken by ERA, including the Ranger 3 Deeps exploration decline, assisting our decision-making."

"In recent years ERA has demonstrated an open and collaborative approach to addressing the challenges at the Ranger mine and in planning future projects, on the Ranger Project Area, with sensitivity toward Mirarr rights and responsibilities. The Mirarr have been able to invest in very worthwhile projects such as the Djidbidjidbi Residential College and the youth centre with income derived from mining royalty equivalents. I think this is a win-win for all parties, and while it is early days we look forward to increased engagement with ERA and a productive future," Mr O'Brien concluded.

Mr Atkinson said, "the GAC is undertaking outstanding work in ensuring that Mirarr youth have a strong future. The Djidbidjidbi Residential College is an excellent example of an organisation putting practical plans into place to ensure the outcomes are real and meaningful and will make a positive difference to Indigenous youth and future generations."

"ERA strongly supports this work being undertaken by the GAC and believes that the proposed Ranger mine agreements will provide further significant opportunities to the Mirarr".

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