



Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation

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**Mirarr Perspectives on Mining and
*Rehabilitation at Ranger***

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RANGER URANIUM MINE



KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

Mirarr Views :

“In the end, we form the conclusion that their opposition shall not be allowed to prevail.”

Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry (1977) (pp. 9)



Presentation Overview

- Aboriginal 'World View'
- Origins of Ranger Uranium Mine
 - Land Rights v Uranium v Kakadu v ...
- Brief Historical Overture of Ranger
- The Relevance of Jabiluka
- Finding Common Ground : **Ranger Rehab**
- Current Status of Ranger (Mirarr/GAC View)
- Towards a Shared Post-Mining Landscape ?
- Summary & Conclusion



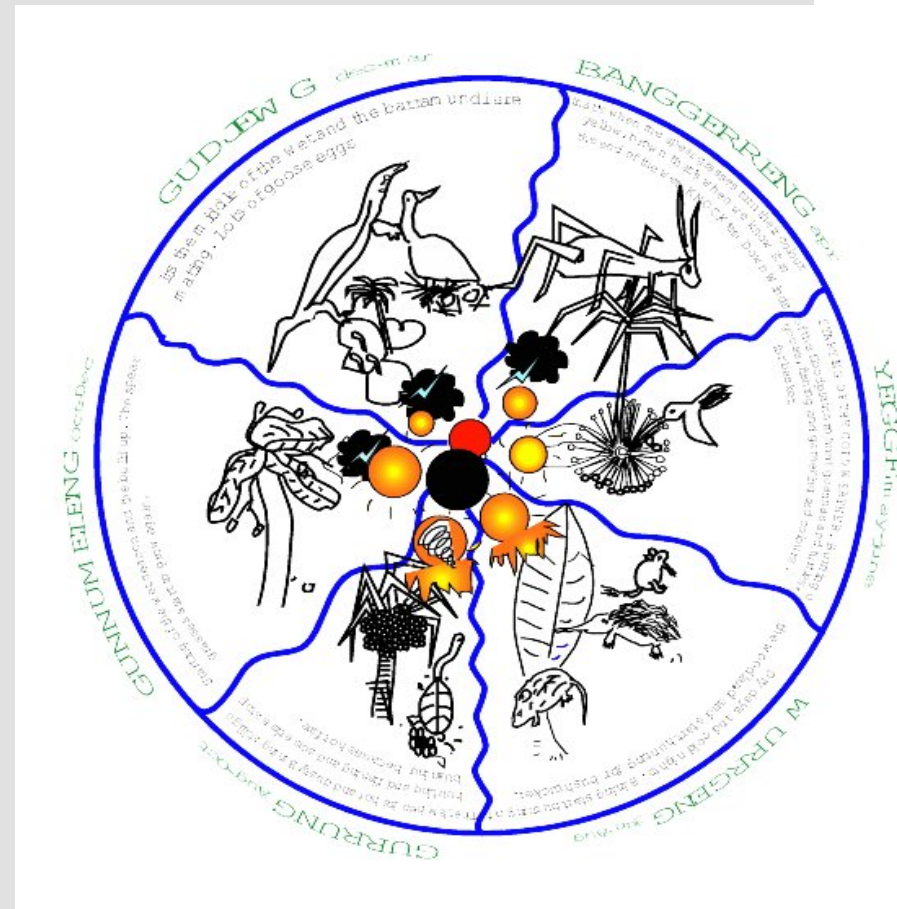
Who Are the Mirarr-Gundjeihmi ?

- The Mirarr-Gundjeihmi are the traditional owners of country which includes the Ranger, Jabiluka, Jabiru township and adjacent Kakadu National Park
- Their claim to this country is long and firmly established both by Bininj tradition as well as ‘white-fella’ law (eg. land rights)
- Mirarr is the clan group while Gundjeihmi is the language group



Aboriginal 'World View'

- Taking care of country is a serious traditional responsibility
- Involves maintenance, including seasonal burning, protection of sacred and/or “dangerous” places
- ***Country is integral to cultural identity***



Origins of Ranger Uranium Mine

- First indications of Ranger were Oct 1969 ...
- Major field work in 1970 proved a large, viable uranium project : Jabiluka, Koongarra and Nabarlek later discovered
- This time also coincided with increasing public debate about land rights, nuclear issues (ie. uranium) and a proposed national park in the same region ...
- ***Strong government support for mining but :***
 - ***Env Impact Ass't, Woodward & Ranger Inquiries***



Brief Historical Overture of Ranger

- **Throughout the 1970's, there was vociferous debate about Ranger :**
 - Woodward Inquiry a 'veto on mining' was primal for land rights
 - Whitlam Government bought 50% of Ranger, legal agreements
 - Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry – recognised persistent, clear Mirarr opposition but this was 'not allowed to prevail'
- **Ranger was given final legal approvals in Jan. 1979, first production in Aug. 1981**
- **Gagadju Association established (royalties)**
- **Mirarr formed Gundjeihmi Abor Corp in 1995**



The Relevance of Jabiluka

- Jabiluka is highly relevant to the debate about Ranger (in many ways)
- Jabiluka is an integral part of Mirarr country
- In 1996, a revised Jabiluka project was proposed by ERA / North Ltd
- Due to ongoing concerns over the extent of impacts from Ranger, Mirarr opposed Jabiluka and worked hard to prevent the then development – joined by many allies
- In 2000, Rio Tinto takeover North Ltd ...



Finding Common Ground : Ranger Rehab

- Despite the adversarial Jabiluka campaigns waged by Mirarr-GAC and North/ERA, the fact remained the same :

Ranger would eventually need rehabilitation

- From 2000 Rio Tinto adopted a different approach and listened : GAC took stock
- Result : Jabiluka was placed on 'LTCM'
- ERA regularly involve GAC and consultants over issues for Ranger (& Jabiluka)
- Co-operation and understanding improved ...



Current Status of Ranger (Mirarr/GAC View)

- **Long history of environmental ‘incidents’**
 - 2000 Tailings Water Leak; 2002 Incidents; the (infamous) 2004 Process-Drinking Water incident; 2007 flood; etc.
- **In the early 2000’s, Ranger was expected to finished production by about 2011 or so**
- **In recent years, given the uranium price, ERA have continually revised and changed their mining-milling plan for Ranger**
- **Present plans extend milling to ~2020 and :**
 - milling of lower grade stockpiles, expected larger Pit #3, possible underground mining of Ranger #3, etc ...



Towards a Shared Post-Mining Landscape ?

- Over recent years, Mirrar-GAC have invested heavily in people and resources to facilitate input Ranger (op's & rehab)
- Considerable goodwill was being established to address various issues
- Current Senior Mirarr had expected to be able to walk a rehabilitated Ranger country with their children : this is now most unlikely and is corrupting goodwill to address rehabilitation issues



Summary & Conclusions

- Despite clear differences in world views, both Mirarr-GAC, ERA & others have shared interests in the successful rehabilitation of the Ranger Project Area (& associated issues)
- We can't meaningfully engage on merging these cultural, scientific, regulatory and corporate needs due to the ever-changing production plan for Ranger
- There is hope and goodwill for the future on both sides but this is being tested ...



***“None of the promises last,
but the problems always do.”***

Yvonne Margarula, Senior Traditional Owner

