

Mirrar fighting for country

Information Kit
module 3: Statements & Map



**protect our
living
tradition...**

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Ba-Ngurdmeninj Djabulukku!

**Yun Ngurri-Djalkgarung
Boiwek Gun Nugukbim**

*transl. Stop Jabiluka!
Don't dig the life out of the knob tailed gecko
dreaming*

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Jabiluka: Traditional Owner Statement

The Mirrar Senior Traditional Owner, Yvonne Margarula, has continued an appeal to the international community for support to protect Mirrar living tradition. The following is an extract from her most recent statement.

In October 1998 the World Heritage Bureau and Committee sent a Special Mission to my country to listen to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kakadu region and our grave concerns about the proposed Jabiluka uranium mine.

The Mission heard how the Mirrar living cultural tradition has existed for untold generations and was integral to Kakadu receiving inscription on the World Heritage List for cultural and natural values.

The Mission visited some of our sacred sites which are being disturbed by current construction at Jabiluka with potentially cataclysmic consequences for our people. The Mission saw for themselves that our cultural landscape exists within the Kakadu World Heritage Area and the Jabiluka Mineral Lease. The Mission witnessed how the negative impacts associated with activities on the Jabiluka Mineral Lease negatively impacts on the unique cultural qualities for which Kakadu has been inscribed as a World Heritage Area.

The Mission observed the abysmal conditions in which Mirrar and other Aboriginal people live within the Kakadu World Heritage Area. The Mission heard how our people living within the Kakadu World Heritage Area have one of the lowest life expectancies in the world and continue to die from preventable diseases. The Mission received information from us which shows that mining, and its associated impacts, has been imposed against our wishes; is destroying our ancient political, social and cultural fabric; and is pushing our people to alcoholism, depression and hopelessness.

We know that mining is responsible for these grave dangers to our living tradition because we have directly experienced the social dysfunction resulting from the Ranger uranium mine and the mining town of Jabiru over the last twenty years. We showed the Mission that the Australian Government has been told by its own experts that our community is in crisis and that another mine will exacerbate this danger. The Mission saw for themselves how this advice has been ignored.

Our people see the World Heritage Convention as a vital instrument defending the integrity of the values as they are listed - values which reflect our living tradition, our Mirrar society. We are placing our trust in state parties to the Convention to act upon the imminent danger to these unique values posed by additional mining in our country.

We know that the Australian Government will see any decision other than Kakadu being included on the List of World Heritage in Danger as an approval of their actions by the international community. The Australian Government and the mining company have already made statements in the media that UNESCO are going to reject the Mirrar and endorse the Jabiluka mine.



If you assist the inclusion of Kakadu on the List of World heritage in Danger the Australian Government will be forced to listen to Aboriginal people and work with us to protect the World Heritage values of Kakadu. If you do not the Australian Government will turn its back on the impending demise of our culture and people.

We ask that you listen to our reality and not the promises of the Australian Government. We ask that you do not take the Australian Government's reports about Kakadu on face value as they seek to misrepresent the situation in our country. We ask that listing Kakadu as World Heritage in Danger be supported by a range of remedial recommendations, including the halting of the Jabiluka project and the re-recognition of the political, social and cultural foundations of the Mirrar living tradition.

We ask for your help where others have failed.

The Mirrar have demonstrated the will and the determination to devise and implement solutions to overcome the profound attack on the integrity and foundation of their cultural future. However, the Mirrar believe erosion of their living tradition will continue unrecognised and unaddressed by the Australian Government unless the status of Kakadu National Park is recognised In Danger.

Jabiluka: European Parliament

The following resolution was passed by the European Parliament in response to the Australian Government's decision to allow uranium mining to proceed at Jabiluka.

Passed Unamended: 15/1/98

The European Parliament is:

A: Mindful of the objection of the Australian Government to a human rights clause within the co-operation agreement between Australia and the European Union;

B: Concerned about the recent decision of the Australian Government to consider the development of the Jabiluka Uranium project which is located in an area surrounded by the World Heritage Kakadu National Park;

C: Aware of the motion of the Australian Senate from 20 October 1997 calling on the Australian Government not to proceed with the project;

D: Aware of the fact that the Jabiluka site as well as the nearby Ranger uranium operations are located on legally recognised Aboriginal territory;

E: Considering the fact the sites are of significance for the cultural heritage of the Aboriginal peoples;

F: Noting that the project evaluation by Environment Australia has resulted in concerns regarding its impacts on wilderness and world heritage values as well as on radioactive tailings;

G: Concerned that the health effects of the already existing mining facilities at Roxby Downs, Ranger and the currently planned Jabiluka Project for the Aboriginal people;

The European Parliament:

1. Calls on the Australian Government to respect the status of the Kakadu National Park as a World Heritage site;

2. Calls on the Australian Government to respect the land rights of the Aboriginal Peoples as well as the provisions on indigenous peoples provided by the Vienna Declaration;

3. Calls therefore on the Australian Government not to proceed with the project;

4. Calls on the Commission to obtain an independent study about the imports of the European Union analysing the impact of uranium mining and processing on health and environment, on the rights of indigenous peoples and on waste production of the mining operations in regard to the respective country of origin;

5. Calls on the Member States, as a first step, to ban all imports of uranium from mines where the land rights of Indigenous Peoples are being compromised;

6. Calls on its SubCommittee on Human Rights to closely monitor the case;

7. Instructs the President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, the Australian Government; the Australian Senate, the Northern Land Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency.