

WCC-2020-Res-106-EN

Protection of Kakadu World Heritage site and rehabilitation of the Ranger uranium mine and Ranger Project Area

RECALLING Recommendations 18.67 *Kakadu National Park, Australia* (Perth, 1990), 19.87 *Conservation of Kakadu World Heritage Site, Australia* (Buenos Aires, 1994), 1.104 *Conservation of Kakadu World Heritage Site, Australia* (Montreal, 1996) and 6.102 *Protected areas and other areas important for biodiversity in relation to environmentally damaging industrial activities and infrastructure development* (Hawai'i, 2016);

NOTING the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) position statement of September 2003, which commits member companies to: "Not explore or mine in World Heritage properties. All possible steps will be taken to ensure that existing and future operations adjacent to World Heritage properties are not incompatible with the outstanding universal value for which these properties are listed and do not put the integrity of these properties at risk";

NOTING commitments in the ICMM Good Practice Guide on 'Integrated Mine Closure' to a high degree of community participation in planning and implementing successful mine closures;

AWARE that recent archaeological work at Madjedbebe, on Mirarr lands, shows people have been living in the Kakadu area for at least 65,000 years and that the Ranger uranium mine exists in an enclave, which is ecologically connected to the Kakadu World Heritage area;

FURTHER AWARE that Ranger uranium mine has ceased mining, that milling of stock-piled ore will cease by January 2021 and that rehabilitation will be undertaken for a period of years thereafter;

RECOGNISING that mine rehabilitation has failed at many Australian sites, e.g. uranium mines at Mary Kathleen and Rum Jungle; and

EMPHASISING that given the Outstanding Universal Values of this location, and that Kakadu is one of the first World Heritage Sites listed for both natural and cultural values, it is imperative that the highest level of rehabilitation is undertaken to ensure long-term maintenance of cultural values and ecological integrity of this internationally significant landscape;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. CALLS ON the Australian and Northern Territory (NT) Governments, Energy Resources Australia (ERA) and Rio Tinto to implement the Statutory Environmental Requirements requiring rehabilitation of the Ranger Project Area (RPA) to a state that could be incorporated into the adjacent Kakadu National Park, and to ensure that all tailings and contaminants are isolated from the environment for at least 10,000 years;

2. CALLS ON the above parties to ensure that the Mine Closure Plan (MCP) adequately addresses:

a. remediation of the site in line with Supervising Scientist Branch research work;

b. impacts of climate change on rehabilitation;

c. social impacts of mine closure;

d. enhanced modelling of contaminant pathways; and

e. credible worst-case scenario modelling;

3. EMPHASISES the need for the Australian and NT Governments to revise regulatory and rehabilitation frameworks to meet industry best practice and community expectations, especially with regard to the:

a. requirement that ERA make key documents public, including MCP, rehabilitation monitoring plan and detailed monitoring plan for the rehabilitated RPA, including water quality and topography;

b. commitment to formal public consultation on 'stand-alone' applications;

c. post-closure plan for ongoing maintenance and isolation of mine tailings, including assurance systems; and

d. independent assessment of post-closure financial provision, financial management plans and governance structures; and

4. REQUESTS IUCN to undertake periodic monitoring of the rehabilitation processes at the Ranger uranium mine.

Note: The adoption of this decision by IUCN Members shall be without prejudice to IUCN's role to provide independent technical evaluation of nominated sites for World Heritage Listing.