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28 September 2022

**RE: Atomic Energy Amendment (Mine Rehabilitation and Closure) Bill 2022**

Rio Tinto welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Economics Committee inquiry into the Atomic Energy Amendment (Mine Rehabilitation and Closure) Bill 2022, introduced by the Commonwealth Minister for Resources and Northern Australia into the House of Representatives on 8 September 2022.

If you have any queries on our submission please contact Julia Wilkins

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Our submission is set out below.

Yours sincerely



Kellie Parker  
Chief Executive, Australia



Rio Tinto has operated in Australia for more than 100 years. We produce iron ore, bauxite, alumina, aluminium, and salt at sites and processing plants around the country. Our operations employ approximately 23,000 people in Australia, including more than 1500 Indigenous Australians.

Energy Resources of Australia Ltd (**ERA**) is the operator of the Ranger uranium mine located on the Ranger Project Area in the Northern Territory. ERA's shares are publicly held and traded on the Australian Securities Exchange with Rio Tinto (through wholly owned subsidiaries North Limited and Peko-Wallsend Pty Ltd) currently holding 86.3% of the issued shares in ERA. ERA stopped processing operations at the Ranger Project Area in January 2021, in line with ERA's Government approvals and other relevant agreements.

The successful rehabilitation of the Ranger Project Area is of critical importance to Rio Tinto. As ERA's majority shareholder, Rio Tinto remains committed to ensuring the rehabilitation project is completed to a standard that will establish an environment similar to the adjacent Kakadu National Park.

The representatives of the Mirarr people – the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, Northern Land Council and ERA worked together with the Commonwealth Department of Science, Industry and Resources, and the then Minister for Resources and Northern Australia over 18 months to agree on the appropriate legislative framework to ensure rehabilitation work at the Ranger Project Area can continue to occur beyond January 2026.

ERA has recently stated it is not expected to be able to meet its rehabilitation deadline of January 2026 for the Ranger Project Area, and they are facing a material cost overrun. Rio Tinto believes the proposed amendments are vitally important in order to ensure the regulatory framework is extended to allow ERA the additional time required for the rehabilitation of the Ranger Project Area to be completed to a standard that will establish an environment similar to the adjacent Kakadu National Park.

We reiterate our support for the Atomic Energy Act amendments to ensure ERA can meet its rehabilitation obligations and the Ranger Project Area can be rehabilitated to a standard that will establish an environment similar to the adjacent Kakadu National Park.