



26 April 2013

Mr Justin O'Brien
Chief Executive Officer
Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation
PO Box 245
JABIRU NT 0886

Dear Justin

I am aware that the Aboriginal Land Rights and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013 is currently before the Federal Parliament. As this is the Bill which would add the town of Jabiru to Schedule 1 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, I thought it appropriate to write to the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation to confirm our strong support for "scheduling" of the town of Jabiru.

ERA supports the bill for several reasons.

Firstly, and most importantly, it is very appropriate that Aboriginal ownership of the Jabiru land is recognised in the Act. The Mirarr people are acknowledged by governments, the Northern Land Council, many local organisations, and certainly by ERA as the Traditional Owners with primary rights to speak for that country. Adding Jabiru to Schedule 1 will effectively acknowledge Mirarr as owners of the land on which Jabiru is located.

Secondly, with the current head lease on the town of Jabiru due to expire in 2021, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the future of the town. Successful passage of this Bill through the Parliament will enable a new lease to be entered into with the Northern Territory Government. This will bring clarity and continuity of tenure for local residents and businesses and thus promote confidence in the future of the town.

Thirdly, ERA strongly supports a greater participation by Mirarr in the town of Jabiru. I hope that this would come in a variety of forms including business ownership, investment in future developments, construction of more facilities such as the recently completed residential college, and of course deliver appropriate benefit arising from a new town lease. Successful passage of the Bill is key to delivering these opportunities.

Finally, ERA has certain rights and interests in the town. These stem from its original role as co-funder of the town construction, its ongoing role in governance and provision of certain services to the town, and the importance of the town as a residential base and service provider for the Ranger operations. The Bill has been well designed to both meet the aspirations of the Mirarr and at the same time protect those rights and interests which ERA seeks to preserve. I note that ERA has also relinquished some rights to enable this Bill to proceed. I am very pleased that we have been able to provide this support.

In any discussions you may have with proponents and reviewers of this Bill, I would be very happy for you to convey ERA's strong support and to provide a copy of this letter in testimony if that is useful.

I sincerely hope that the Bill enjoys a smooth and expeditious passage through the Parliament and that a new town lease can be finalised in the very near future.

Best regards

Rob Atkinson
Chief Executive

CC: Alan Tietzel