



**AUSTRALIAN
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FOUNDATION**

ACF submission to Senate Economics Legislation Committee Inquiry into the Atomic Energy Amendment (Mine Rehabilitation and Closure) Bill

September 2022

The Australian Conservation Foundation Inc (ACF) is Australia's oldest national environment organization and a leading national advocate for the environment.

ACF is strictly non-partisan and we are proud of our political independence. We work to protect, restore, celebrate and sustain Australia's environment through research, consultation, education, partnerships and advocacy.

ACF has a long history of involvement and advocacy in Kakadu and with the Ranger uranium mine in particular and welcomes this chance to comment.

In recent years this engagement has seen ACF provide detailed commentary on Energy Resources of Australia's Mine Closure Plan, make representations to both mine operator ERA and mine majority owner Rio Tinto on the need for comprehensive rehabilitation and support moves by the Mirarr Traditional Owners and the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation to advance a post-mining regional economy and governance framework.

ACF agrees with views outlined by Resource Minister King in her address to the House of Representatives on September 8th, 2022 including that:

- For such an environmentally, culturally and historically important region, only the highest standard of rehabilitation will do.
- ...more time is needed to complete rehabilitation.
- Ranger's rehabilitation is a priority... and we all look forward to seeing Ranger being a world-class example of mine rehabilitation.

ACF further notes the Minister's comments around the divisive and contested history of the Ranger operation.



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This mine was imposed against the clear wishes of the Mirarr Traditional Owner's and for decades was a focal point for deep concern and opposition. The current works offer a chance to redress this historic injustice as well as to rehabilitate the affected area.

There is clear alignment amongst diverse stakeholders about the need for high quality rehabilitation works and a credible timeframe to facilitate this.

The works at Ranger will continue to be complex and challenging and there is a clear need for continuing stakeholder attention, company transparency, robust regulation and continuing post-closure monitoring. An extended timeline for on-ground works is a pivotal step in advancing these outcomes.

ACF particularly notes the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation's support for the legislation and their sustained advocacy for an extended rehabilitation timeframe.

Given this key legitimacy threshold and the need for more rehabilitation time and greater certainty ACF welcomes this legislation and supports its swift passage into law.

Further comment/clarification:

Dave Sweeney
ACF nuclear free campaigner

