

## 4 STATUTORY COMMITTEES

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### 4.1 Introduction

During 2007–08, the Supervising Scientist Division provided secretariat and administrative support to two statutory committees: the Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee and the Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee.

These committees play important roles in facilitating discussion and information exchange between stakeholders in relation to the Division’s environmental supervision and assessment activities, and facilitating peer review of associated scientific research activities.

### 4.2 Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee

The Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee (ARRAC) was established under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978*. ARRAC facilitates communication between government, industry and community stakeholders on environmental issues associated with uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers Region.

ARRAC is chaired by Professor Charles Webb, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) at Charles Darwin University, and includes members representing the following stakeholder organisations:

- NT Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines
- NT Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts
- NT Department of Health and Community Services
- NT Office of the Administrator
- Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
- Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency
- Energy Resources of Australia Ltd
- Cameco Australia
- Hanson Pty Ltd
- Koongarra Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of AREVA)
- Northern Land Council
- Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation
- Environment Centre Northern Territory
- Jabiru Town Council
- Parks Australia, Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
- Supervising Scientist Division, Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

ARRAC offers a valuable forum for stakeholders to exchange views and relevant information on the issues that relate to environmental protection and rehabilitation from the effects of uranium mining. Public disclosure of environmental performance data through ARRAC is an important means of ensuring transparency and enhancing trust between the various stakeholder organisations.

Information reports are also provided by each of the stakeholder organisations at each ARRAC meeting which promotes knowledge sharing and reduces potential misinformation. Information reports usually include a summary and interpretation of monitoring data, details of periodic environmental reports from mining companies and the outcomes of audit and assessment activity. SSD provides a comprehensive report to each ARRAC meeting.

A link to the summary records of previous meetings is available on the ARRAC web site at [www.environment.gov.au/ssd/communication/committees/arrac/meeting.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/ssd/communication/committees/arrac/meeting.html).

ARRAC met twice during 2007–08: in Jabiru in August 2007 and in Darwin in March 2008. Key issues considered by ARRAC at these meetings included:

- the status of mine planning and development at Ranger;
- the results of chemical, biological and radiological monitoring for Ranger and Jabiluka;
- SSD communication and research activities;
- the outcomes of environmental audits and assessments of Ranger, Jabiluka and Nabarlek;
- the outcomes of Minesite Technical Committee (MTC) meetings;
- the status of mine rehabilitation projects in the South Alligator Valley;
- progress in the Uranium Industry Framework; and
- the Northern Land Council's work with the Alligator Rivers Region stakeholders and traditional owners.

### **4.3 Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee**

The Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee (ARRTC) was established under the *Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978*.

ARRTC plays an important role in ensuring the scientific research conducted by *eriss*, ERA, NT Government agencies and others into the protection of the environment from the impacts of uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers Region is appropriate and of the highest possible standard. ARRTC also reviews the quality of the science underpinning regulatory assessment and approval of proposals by uranium mining companies in the Alligator Rivers Region.

ARRTC reports openly, independently and without restriction. Further details on the outcomes of previous ARRTC meetings are available on the ARRTC web site at [www.environment.gov.au/ssd/communication/committees/arrtc/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/ssd/communication/committees/arrtc/index.html).

Members of ARRTC are appointed by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts and include:

- an independent Chair (Mr Ray Evans);
- the Supervising Scientist;
- a number of independent scientific members (including the Chair) with specific expertise nominated by the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS);
- representatives from the Northern Land Council, the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines, Energy Resources of Australia Ltd (for Ranger and Jabiluka), Hanson Pty Ltd (for Nabarlek) and Parks Australia.

Dr Simon Barry was appointed as an independent scientific member of ARRTC in September 2007 replacing Dr Keith Hayes. Professor Jonathon Nott resigned in June 2008; recruitment of his replacement is in progress.

ARRTC met twice during 2007–08: in October 2007 and March 2008 (which included a fieldtrip to Ranger mine). Both meetings were held in Darwin.



**Figure 4.1** ERA staff explaining to ARRTC and SSD visitors wet season management of runoff from waste rock stockpiles during a field trip to Ranger mine

The key issues considered by ARRTC during these meetings included:

- current and proposed scientific research activities for *eriss* and ERA, in the context of the ARRTC Key Knowledge Needs;
- outcomes of chemical, biological and radiological research and monitoring being undertaken by DPIFM, ERA and SSD;
- scientific and technical issues relating to Ranger, Jabiluka and Nabarlek;
- the status of South Alligator Valley rehabilitation activities;
- activity reports from the various stakeholder organisations.

At its March 2008 meeting, ARRTC approved a revised set of Key Knowledge Needs that will provide the basis for prioritising and planning the environmental and mining-related scientific research activities undertaken by the relevant stakeholder organisations over the period 2008–2010. Both the original and the revised Key Knowledge Needs are included in Appendix 1 of this Annual Report.