

# Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee

## Minutes – 22 August 2006 – Jabiru

Meeting commenced: 9.40am

### Item – Welcome

Charles Webb welcomed members, representatives and observers and acknowledged the TOs of the Alligators River Region.

### Item 2 – Attendance & apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Position</b>
Charles Webb	CDU	Chairperson
Carolyn Lord	SSD	Secretariat
Leesa Carson	DITR	Members representative
Mike Delosa	DPIFM	Members representative
Emma King	ECNT	Members representative
Peter Burns	ARPANSA	Member
Ron Matthews	Cameco	Member
Xavier Schobben	DHCS	Member
Chris Salisbury	ERA	Member
Shane Maraldo	Hanson	Member
Ian Newnham	JTC	Member
Glen Meade	PAN	Member
Alan Hughes	SSD	Ex-officio
Russell Robinson	DHCS	Deputy member
Mike Lawton	DNRETA	Deputy Member
Gillian Jan	DPIFM	Deputy Member
Philipa Varris	ERA	Deputy Member
Howard Smith	NLC	Deputy Member
Keith Tayler	DPIFM	Deputy
Geoff Kyle	GAC	Deputy
Christine Fawcett	DPIFM	Observer
Michael Delosa	DPIFM	Members representative
Andrew Speechley	ERA	Observer
David Klessa	EWLS	Observer
Julian Barry	PAN	Observer
Christina Walker	SSD	Observer
David Jones	SSD	Observer
Greg Calvert	SSD	Observer
Ian Loftus	SSD	Observer
Michelle Iles	SSD	Observer

Peter Bayliss	SSD	Observer
Richard McAllister	SSD	Observer
Sally-Ann Atkins	SSD	Observer
Suzanne Davis-Hall	SSD	Observer
Amanda Buckley	ERA	Observer
Bessie Coleman	Warramin Aboriginal Corporation	Observer
Dale Kenny	ERA	
<b>Apologies</b>		
Jean Jolly	AFMECO	Member
John Carroll	NT Office of the Administrator	Member

*Housekeeping issues - Alan Hughes*

Attendees were informed of evacuation procedures

### **Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> meeting – April 2006**

Minutes were accepted by ARRAC

### **Item 4 – Business arising**

*Ranger mine incidents – raised by Emma King*

Emma advised that ECNT would like to take up the offer of ERA to provide the list of ERA incidents to ECNT.

**Action: Acknowledged by Chris Salisbury and Philipa Varris. ERA will forward reports to ECNT.**

### **Item 5 – Supervising Scientist Report, including OSS audits and inspections**

Richard McAllister presented the *Report of the Supervising Scientist to the Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee – August 2006* to ARRAC. (PowerPoint presentation available).

Points noted: reporting period is from April – August 2006. Water chemistry was included in the December 2005 report and is not covered in the March 2006 report. Exploration activities won't be presented until March 07.

Topics covered:

*Ranger*

- Developments – ERA to discuss in Item 8
- Supervisory activities
  - Routine Periodic Inspections (conducted monthly)
  - Minesite Technical Committee - held on 30 May and 21 July 2006
  - Audit conducted May 2006

- Applications reviewed
  - TSF gravel extraction
    - Application for fill material for TSF construction
    - TSF raise already approved to 51m
  - New Irrigation areas Jabiru East Land Application Area and RP1 Land Application Area extension
  - Increase in RP2 Maximum Operating Level (MOL)
    - Increase in maximum operating level via construction of spillway to reduce required freeboard
  - Temporary storage of pond water on 2's stockpile (proposal)
- Incident notifications – DPIFM to provide more detail in item 6
  - 33 Incidents reported on
  - No independent investigation required for any incident
  - 2 incidents followed up during routine inspections
  - Retention Pond 2 (RP2) MOL exceeded
  - ADU spill in solvent extraction

#### *Jabiluka*

- Supervisory activities
  - Routine periodic inspection conducted in August 2006
  - Minesite Technical Committee meetings held on 30 May and 21 July 2006
  - Audit conducted in May 2006

#### *Nabarlek*

- Supervisory activities
  - Revegetation setback due to cyclone Monica and fires

#### *Koongarra*

- Supervisory activities
  - No activity reported

#### *South Alligator valley*

- Supervisory Activities
  - \$7.4 million allocated to rehabilitate sites in the South Alligator valley (*see Item 10*).

### **Discussion**

*Request for update on activities relating to Koongarra and approach by AREVA (also known as Koongarra Pty Ltd) to NLC – raised by Emma King*

Emma King referred to the statement on Koongarra in the *SSD report to ARRAC – August 2006*, referred to moratorium period ceasing in April 2005, and requested an update on activities between NLC and AREVA.

Alan Hughes advised that AREVA were unable to approach NLC prior to 26 April 2005 and details on this had not been provided in the SSD report to ARRAC, as it is not SSD's business.

Howard Smith advised that AREVA had made application to the TOs through the NLC, but this had been put on hold.

### **SSD monitoring activities – presented by Michelle Iles**

Michelle Iles presented to ARRAC on the monitoring activities, topics included:

- Ranger surface water quality
  - Weekly water chemistry sampling routine
  - Magela Creek was still flowing, although Gulungul Creek had ceased to flow the previous week.
- Magela Creek creekside monitoring
  - conducted bi-weekly, both upstream and downstream.
- Community studies (macroinvertebrate studies)
- Magela Creek uranium
  - Magela Creek uranium – SSD and ERA data. Data showed a good comparison between ERA and SSD. The focus level was not reached at any stage this season.
  - Uranium in Magela Creek 2001–2006
- Gulungul Creek uranium
  - Gulungul Creek uranium – SSD and ERA. The large spike is a result from an ERA sample taken on site as soon as Gulungul Creek started flowing.
  - An overview of the chart, *Uranium in Gulungul Creek 2001-2006*, was presented to ARRAC.
- Creekside monitoring and fish communities
  - Data detailing the results of snail eggs and fish survival in both the upstream and downstream sites was presented the conclusion from data is that there was no adverse affects to sensitive species from the discharges from minesite.
  - Data was presented on the Channel Billabongs (and differences in the controlled and test site). Checquered Rainbow fish have declined at Mudginberri Billabong since moinitoring commenced. The decline is not attributed to mining but to changes measured on the Magela floodplain such as stream discharge, natural solutes, length of dry and floodplain habitat.
  - An update was provided on sampling communities in the shallow lowland billabongs. Samples were collected for macroinvertebrates instead of fish during in the dry season 2006. This was to address the data deficiency required for the development of closure criteria for these sites.
- Jabiluka surface water
  - The monthly water chemistry sampling regime for ERA, SSD and DPIFM
  - Biological studies for Jabiluka have been discontinued while the site is in long term care and maintenance status.

- Ngarrdj uranium
  - ERA and SSD's data presented is in agreement.
  - No exceedance of focus trigger levels in Ngarrdj.
  - No real changes to data collected from Ngarrdj since 1998
- Radiation monitoring
- Jabiru and Jabiru East and 4 Gates Road Station, near Mudginberri
  - data was presented for period June 2003 to June 2006 on the radon decay product (RDP) and long lived alpha activities (LLAA) concentrations measured by SSD and ERA in Jabiru and Jabiru East and 4 Gates Road Station, near Mudginberri – no unusual values were recorded.
- Surface water quality research and development

## **Discussion**

### *Cause of spike in Gulungul Creek – raised by Howard Smith*

Howard queried if the cause of the spike was known. Michelle Iles advised that an honour student at SSD was looking at these patterns in comparison with flow data and rainfall events and the results would be reported in the SSD Annual Report. It was noted that the student was only able to collect one season of good data to base findings on. In the previous year sulfate showed a pattern, but not on the following year. The event coincided with small creeks flushing.

### *Agreement of data between SSD and ERA – raised by Charles Webb*

Discussion was held on the good agreement between SSD and ERA's data, and the tests of significance between upstream and downstream on the different dates. A report on the first 5 years of SSD monitoring is due and statistical differences will be tested then. David Klessa advised that every year ERA report on upstream and downstream and compares the source of data between DPIFM and ERA and SSD.

### *Decline in fish numbers downstream– raised by Howard Smith*

There was some discussion about the dissimilarity index attributed to fish communities in Mudjinbardi and control billabongs. The index has shown decreasing dissimilarity, but that is attributed to declining numbers of rainbow fish at Mudjinbardi and not at the controls.

Howard Smith asked if the decline in rainbow fish numbers in Mudjinbardi Billabong suggested a deleterious effect.

Michelle Iles replied that, in the absence of pre-mining data, the change is not necessarily deleterious, but continuing study was needed.

Geoff Kyle noted the different water chemistry in the control billabong.

David Jones, noted different flow rates and characteristics were also important factors.

Charles Webb, believed the trend could not easily be dismissed. The community similarity is changing and that means something.

Michelle Iles noted that such considerations had not been excluded in the study or the report.

Alan Hughes noted that the data points of the index exhibit a change in 1999 that caused the trend slope. That is being investigated against other records.

**Action: Shelley Iles will consult with Chris Humphrey on the data so the issue on fish decline can be clarified in the SSD Annual Report**

*Recording of data – raised by Geoff Kyle*

Geoff Kyle noted that continuous monitoring had been a recommendation of the 2002 Senate Inquiry and was only now being implemented. Referring to the graphs given in Fig.1.8 of the SDD report, Geoff Kyle noted that the weekly or monthly measurement on the basis of which SSD had hitherto assured TOs there was no detrimental effect on the environment from contamination arising on the Ranger Mine, were shown by continuous monitoring to be inadequate tools for understanding the system. Geoff Kyle wondered if the advice had not been accurate given the knowledge gaps indicated by the new technology.

Michelle Iles agreed, but noted that, in recent years, detrimental effect had been assessed against an ecotoxicological criterion

*Radium levels in mussels – raised by Xavier Schobben*

A discussion was held on the concerns of local aboriginal people about the radium levels in mussels from Magela Creek, and the possible ingestion of radium from eating the mussels. ARRAC was informed that as part of the bioaccumulation project, mussels are collected from Mudginberri each year and are analysed for radium, thorium and polonium. TOs have visited the *eriss* labs and have had staff from the Environmental Radioactivity program explain the process of analysis and the results available so far.

SSD is currently revising the bushtucker project in line with changes in local aboriginal diet of terrestrial and aquatic animals.

Geoff Kyle noted that Mirarr and other Binninj residing at Mudjinbardi appreciated those studies and were reassured by the results.

**Audit and Inspection activities – presented by Suzanne Davis-Hall**

Suzanne David-Hall presented to ARRAC on the audit and inspection activities, topics covered:

*Ranger*

- Inspections and audits
  - 3 routine periodic inspections
  - 1 environmental audit
- Ranger audit (May 2006)
  - Audits are undertaken by Office of the Supervising Scientist, Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines and Northern Land Council
  - New audit ranking system used for audits (see PowerPoint presentation), similar to system used in the past, has been implemented
  - Includes recommendations for level of action to provide auditee direction in remediating the problem (or potential problem) prior to follow up audit.
  - 63 criteria assessed
    - 1 urgent action (Schedule 6.3 – Attendance records for ERA staff induction on required topics not fully compliant)
    - 2 required action in form of a firm deadline

- 3 were satisfactory but improvement recommended
- 57 were satisfactory

*Jabiluka*

- Routine Periodic Inspection – 1 completed
- Environmental audit (May 2006)
  - 18 criteria assessed
    - 1 satisfactory, but improvement required (Capping of redundant bore holes)
    - 17 satisfactory

*Nabarlek*

- Site visited to inspect damage from Cyclone Monica
- Audit scheduled for November 2006

*South Alligator Valley*

- Inspected June 2006
- No issues of concern noted

*King River and Myra Camp exploration sites*

- No issues identified with the drilling program or the operations at the King River Camp.

**Discussion**

*Access to Jabiluka site– raised by Geoff Kyle*

‘With reference to audit outcomes, the SSD PowerPoint presentation stated

*‘Section 2.1.2. maintain the site in a state of care and maintenance, by undertaking activities including: Capping of redundant bore holes.*

*This item was ranked as Conditional during the 2005 audit. The redundant bore holes are located on an aboriginal site of significance (Boiwek sacred site) and access has not been granted by the Traditional Owners to complete the work.’*

Geoff Kyle stated that the Mirarr TOs had not refused permission. Rather, Senior Mirarr had indicated to the MTC that they were not opposed to an appropriate expedition entering Mine Valley to locate and cap redundant bores and to acquire water samples from two bores identified as indicators of seepage from the Jabiluka decline. It had been agreed at the MTC that OSS would produce a map and plan, and consult with the TOs. OSS has yet to produce the plan and map. Chris Salisbury queried whether anyone had a map so he could consult with OSS and GAC to arrange inspections and sampling.

**Action: Suzanne Davis-Hall will chase up map and provide to ERA**

*Audit rankings – raised by Charles Webb*

Charles Webb asked for an explanation on the rating ‘Satisfactory – but recommend improvement’ and queried what requirements the operator was given to respond and whether there was any legislative requirement to undertake the improvement. Keith Tayler referred to the Mine Management Act as being one of continuous improvement, in that an area, that is not a hazard could be improved. He also made reference to the Minerals and Energy audit guide as well.

## **Item 6 Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines report**

Keith Tayler presented the Northern Territory *Supervising Authorities Environmental Surveillance Monitoring in the Alligator Rivers Region – Report 52 (August 2006)* to ARRAC (Power Point presentation available).

Topics covered included:

- Minesite Technical Committee (MTC) meetings
  - Ranger and Jabiluka MTC meetings held in March, May and July 2006

MTC minutes were provided to committee members (reference papers 6A)

- Nabarlek MTC not held during reporting period
- Variation of Ranger Authorisation 0108-04
  - Issued 8 May 2006 to include upstream Gulungul Creek monitoring site in the statutory program and alter the potable water monitoring requirements.
- Environmental and safety issues
  - ADU in product packing area – 7 March 2006
  - Leak in SX bund – 10 March 2006
  - Hydrochloric acid spill – 20 March 2006
  - ADU spray onto roadway adjacent to plant – 27 April 2006
  - Low pH liquor spill into Retention Pond 2 – 9 May 2006
  - Hydrocarbon contamination in RP3 – 15 June 2006
  - Minor radiation contamination on forklift – 28 June 2006
  - Process permeate siphoned into pond water stream – 28 June 2006.
- Operational approvals
  - Extension to land application areas
  - Tailings dam lift
  - Raise RP2 maximum operating level
- Pond Water
  - Actions initiated in response to increased pond water inventory
  - Pond water storage options
- Ranger surface water

Monitoring sites were identified and information provided on

- Magela commenced flow on 5 December 2006
- RP1 commenced flow on 20 January and cased flow 29 May 2006
- Monitoring was conducted in accordance with authorisation 108-04
- Water quality followed seasonal trends

- General agreement between DPIFM and ERA data, with exception of early EC readings
  - No significant impact to downstream environment.
  - Chemical data
- Guidelines and limits were presented along with charts on results for
- Magela Creek
    - uranium
    - electrical conductivity
    - magnesium and sulfate
  - Retention Pond 1
    - electrical conductivity
    - uranium and sulfate
  - Gulungul Creek
    - uranium
    - electrical conductivity
  - Bore 83/1
    - electrical conductivity, sulfate and uranium
  - OB27 (located east of the plant, adjacent to George Town Billabong)
    - electrical conductivity
    - sulfate
    - uranium
  - Radiation monitoring for 2005
    - Statistics provided
  - Jabiluka
    - Surface water quality data for 7 sites was provided for period 1998–2006.
  - Swift Creek
    - Uranium data was presented
  - Nabarlek
    - Impact of Cyclone Monica was discussed and images provided.

## **Discussion**

### *Incidents – raised by Geoff Kyle*

Geoff Kyle noted that there had been four incidents involving contaminated vehicles in the space of eighteen months. Each time, ERA assured stakeholders that systems were in place to prevent recurrence. GAC is concerned that ERA has not addressed the causes of these incidents, and that a future, more serious incident might cause human health risk to increase or environmental detriment. Keith Tayler commented that all the incidents that had occurred were very minor and no significant incidents had occurred.

#### *Tailings water management approvals – raised by Emma King*

Discussion was held on the approvals sought for use of Pit#3 to assist with the tailings water management and the expansion of Pit#3 including the contingency plans in place by ERA to deal with excess water and the documentation outlining these. A query on whether any expansion of Pit#3 would be underground or open cut was made by Emma King who advised that ECNT would like to see any applications for expansion of Pit#3 go under EIS process.

Alan Hughes advised ARRAC members that amendments to the EPBC Act would outline any new processes that are required.

#### *Land Application Area – raised by Emma King*

Emma King queried whether the application to commence irrigation of pond water at the site of the former Jabiru East camp would only occur during this dry season and whether there was a possibility of the pond water being processed prior to being irrigated. Keith Tayler advised that the water treatment plant was working at full capacity at the moment and that DPIFM were intending to collect data during the course of the irrigation over the dry season to determine the impact. The main issue for ERA was to get Pit#3 water released so the pit can be mined. The level of water in Pit#3 was excessive due to increased rainfall from Cyclone Monica and larger wet season fall.

Emma raised concerns of contamination resulting in large amount of pond water being released quickly and that having to release large amounts of water anytime is mismanagement.

Philipa Varris advised that ERA had started releasing water on one line to Jabiru East and the approval process would consider whatever data was available for discussion at that time.

#### *Tailings Dam lift*

Emma King queried discussion on slippage of dam walls and the engineering undertaken on the tailings dam lift. Keith Tayler referred to the extensive review completed and reported in the Coffey report.

Geoff Kyle raised the large dam criteria and asked about the decommissioning and replacement of piezometers. He was advised that the new piezometers are designed by the dam designer and placed before the old ones are bulldozed.

Howard Smith asked whether there had been any thought about putting tailings into Pit#1 and going for an early closure. Chris Salisbury advised that ERA needed the space in Pit# 1 for storage and the raise on tailings dam.

#### *Increase of MOL at RP2*

Discussion on construction of a permanent spillway from RP2 was held. The MOL for RP2 was raised in the interim for the dry season. ARRAC was advised that the interim decision was risk based and made due to minimal environmental impact. Whether the MOL would be reduced after October 2006 was discussed, along with pond water treatment over the last few years

#### *Variation in DPIFM results - EC*

Keith Tayler advised that some testing had been conducted as to why EC samples were not same. Samples taken at the same time have been retested as well as the equipment used, including calibration checks. It was noted that results were not high in Gulungul or Magela Creek and DPIFM had considered that the sample spike was due to the instrumentation. David Klessa highlighted the need for information on the sample collection and investigation to be clearly documented in case it was referred to at a later stage.

### *Uranium and Sulfate levels in RPI – raised by Geoff Kyle*

Reference was made to graph 3.7. Geoff Kyle identified that the seasonal levels are slowly increasing and there seemed to be a trend over a period of time. He acknowledged that the levels of contamination were relatively low but raised the concern of TOs that the levels were increasing, and the possible issues with rehabilitation.

David Klessa advised that ERA were aware of increases in EC (attributed to MgSO<sub>4</sub>) in RPI water since the late 90s caused primarily by land application in the RPI catchment. The typical seasonal range in EC is 200-600 µS/cm. He also noted that improvements in uranium concentrations were a direct result from works in the upper RPI catchment to better manage seepage.

### *Figure 3.8 (RPI Uranium and Sulfate) and Figure 3.10 Coonjimba Billabong uranium – raised by Geoff Kyle*

It was noted that data to 2005 was available and the increase in uranium levels was apparent. Geoff Kyle raised concern that the uranium recorded downstream hadn't reduced and queried whether the increase would continue.

## **Item 7 – Issues raised by environmental NGOs – Emma King**

Issues raised have been addressed throughout other agenda items.

## **Item 8 ERA developments– Chris Salisbury**

Chris Salisbury provided an update on the following topic relating to management of ERA Ranger mine.

- Staff and organisational changes
  - Philipa Varris replaced Alex Zapantis as Manager, Environment, Safety and Health.
  - Appointed a new manager Exploration – Greg Rogers.
- Health and Safety, including the figures for lost time injury rates for ERA for 2001–2006, (year to date)
  - Safety performance continued to improved. 1.4 per 200000 hrs worked. Better than 50% reduction on 2005 figures. 3 lost time injuries and total of 4 injuries compared to 14 last year.
  - ESH Management systems continued 4801 system and achieved accreditation. Completed 2 surveillance audits this past year.
  - ISO14001 continues and has been upgrade to 2004 version of the standard.
  - Contractors –v- employees safety injury rate (Jan 2005 – July2006). Contractors are 4.5 time higher than employees.
- Upgrade of crushing area – \$2 million improvements and future work improvements
- Exploration activities at Ranger 18 East, Ranger Deeps and inside bund
- Production activities including
  - Current price at US\$47 per pound
  - Wet season impact on production

- Calcifier and acid plant refurbishment.
- Cyclone impact on ERA houses, site and water inventory
  - 190 Houses damaged
  - Damage to site minimal. Major damage to aluminium irrigation systems in Magela. Access to areas cause issues. Discussion

## **Discussion**

### *Cyclone strategy raised by Emma King*

Emma King asked whether there had been any reassessment of the cyclone strategy. Chris Salisbury advised that the ERA's disaster management plan included cyclone threat and improvements will be incorporated in plan taking into account the Cyclone Monica incident.

## **ERA developments (continued) – Philipa Varris**

Philipa Varris presented on the developments at Ranger and Jabiluka to ARRAC.

Topics included

- Water Treatment Plant – pond and process water treatment.
- Water disposal and storage methods
  - Stockpile ponds – remove 7 megalitres of water per week.
  - New land application areas (LAA) – one line of sprinklers is operating, the second is to be commissioned this week. The first line to Jabiru East LAA is due to be commissioned and the second line is still under design.
  - RP1ext LAA and the extension to Jabiru East LAA are fully fenced and bollards have been erected to prevent access by tourists. Signage is displayed on bollards and signs have been ordered in different languages.
  - Different sprinklers were tested. Wobblers create greater sized droplets therefore less spray is generated. ERA have fitted these sprinklers to the LAA and in a few years may disperse to other areas.
  - RP2 – interim and maximum operating level. A report on the spillway is due from Peter Burgess (the design engineer) (by next MTC in draft) to determine if it is still in compliance with the ANCOLD 2003 Guidelines.
- TSF lift underway
  - Lift was approved on 28 June 2006 and construction is underway.
  - Stockpiles have been tested for comparisons – progressive construction reports have been prepared on this. Full report will be available to ensure completed works meets design. At various stages signing off on construction process as being constructed.
- Update on Pit1 barrier
- 2005–06 Wet season – Ranger Monitoring data charts
  - Magela Creek – filterable uranium
  - Magela creek – EC
  - Gulungul Creek – Filtered Uranium

- Gulungul Creek – EC
- Jabiluka Swift Creek – Uranium
- Jabiluka Swift Creek – EC
- Incidents
  - Failure of soda ash closing systems resulting in partially treated product siphoning into permeate tank (20 June 2006). The discharge line has now relocated to prevent flushing in that area.
  - RP2 exceedance of the maximum operating level. (14 July 2006). This event occurred due to occurrence of unexpected rainfall. The pump to Pit#3 was turned off until the maximum operating level returned to normal.
  - Surface flow detected within bunded areas of East Djalkmarra due to over watering (20 July 2006)
  - 38 Truck loads from Pit#3 were sent to wrong stockpile (30 July 2006). All was relocated to correct area.
- Revegetation activities at Djarr Djarr Billabong

The area survived Cyclone Monica. Seedlings have been grown up with 81–88% survival on the Melaleuca and woodlands area. The site was visited last week and there was water still in area.

- Closure planning activities
- Irrigation on land application area at Jabiru East

## Discussion

### *Sprinkler systems used on land application area*

Discussion was held on the testing of sprinklers for use on the land application area. A specific team at Queensland University did testing on pesticide dispersion using sprinklers. Application rates have been tested to determine how much water the area can take. Between 30 and 40 sprinklers were tested and the red wobbler identified as suitable. It was acknowledged that ERA would have to take an active role in weed management due to being irrigated due dry season and providing artificial wet season during dry. ERA will be doing supplementary planting in these areas due to the extensive damage from Cyclone Monica and some damage caused to access areas. Kakadu Native Plants will be growing seedlings for revegetation of this area. David Klessa advised that the Jabiru East site was chosen for use as it was and already impacted area.

Geoff Kyle noted the negative effect on TO confidence of ERA's resumption of the rehabilitated land known now as the JELAA. David Klessa did not agree that there was any cause for concern, saying that the area had not been rehabilitated and was always operational.

### *Pit#1 Barrier monitoring report – raised by Geoff Kyle*

Geoff Kyle requested that a copy of the Pit#1 barrier monitoring report be regularly sent to him. He advised he last received this in May 2006.

<b>Action: Reports are to be sent to Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation</b>
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## **Item 9 – Hanson**

### **9.1 Nabarlek**

Shane Maraldo informed ARRAC members that the same program was continued at Nabarlek during the wet, but there had been some setbacks due to Cyclone Monica. Hanson are assessing the situation and working on documents to be presented to NLC in the future.

## **Item 10 – South Alligator Valley mine rehabilitation – Julian Barry and Bessie Coleman**

Julian Barry (PAN) and Bessie Coleman, a traditional owner of the Gunlom Trust Area (GLT) presented to ARRAC on the status of the GLT rehabilitation project. They

- Advised that \$7.33M has been allocated to this initiative, to be spent over the next 4 financial years.
- Summarised key actions outlined in the ‘Part A’ Gunlom Land Trust (GLT) Rehabilitation Plan;
- Summarised key actions required to address the ‘Part B’ sites
- Discussed management of the Gunlom residues site, and the interim containment facility.
- Noted that the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) have issued DNP with a Facility License under the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998*. License conditions require Parks Australia to report regularly to ARPANSA four times a year. In addition to formal reporting to ARPANSA, Parks Australia liaises regularly about ARPANSA about the project.
- Noted that OSS undertake regular inspections of key sites within the GLT.
- Noted that before any work takes place, approval from ARPANSA and a EPBC project referral will take place.
- Noted that the project is progressing with excellent cooperation from all involved.

### **Discussion**

Discussion was held on the aim over the next 12 months to push the design of the containment and to rehabilitate Slesbank, Elsherana and ?? site, including relocation of the asbestos in El Sherana site. The importance of TO involvement in the site rehabilitation was acknowledged.

Chris Salisbury raised the issues associated with relocation of residues that shouldn't be there and the difficulty with rehabilitating an already established area to how it used to be prior to mining activity.

Xavier Schobben advised that the design capacity for containment would be 20000 cubic metres. Drums will be sealed and placed into containment. Advice has been received by those inspecting the drums that those exposed to these drums would receive less radiation than someone flying to Sydney. It was identified that the drums were not a threat and contained very low radioactive waste material.

Julian Barry advised that the overall management of the area was from Warramin Aboriginal Corporation. He and Richard McAllister (SSD), liaise with ARPANSA, Howard Smith (NLC) Gillian Jan (DPIFM) and the PAN mob involved in activities.

Emma King queried whether there was any possibility that waste from outside will be stored at this site. Julian Barry advised that this was not on the agenda. Bessie Coleman confirmed that only rubbish from Ballina waste made there in their 50s and 60s that was buried would be stored there.

Emma queried the SSD report with reference to the characterisation of waste on some of the sites and who was involved. Julian Barry advised that SSD was doing work as consultants. All work in Part A goes through a referral process and involves Approval and Wildlife Division (DEH) and TOs and is covered in the EPBC Act. He advised that Part A works is not deemed to be a controlled action in accordance with the Act. Regarding the facility licence ARPANSA required signature before action is taken.

Further discussion was held on the political attitude towards storage of nuclear waste.

## **Item 11 – Exploration**

### **Item 11.1 – Cameco – Ron Matthews**

Ron Matthews advised that there was nil activity since the last ARRAC meeting and that there would be two inspections to be reported at next ARRAC. Due to the wet and Cyclone Monica, Myra Camp had been put out of action and had been running for three weeks. The camp was being accessed by air from Jabiru. King River is open and drilling was occurring in a number of areas.

## **Item 12 – Members reports**

### **Item 12.1 – ARPANSA – Peter Burns**

Peter Burns advised that ARPANSA had no additional information to report.

He advised that the International Commission had completed the draft for a new set of radiation standards, that place emphasis on optimization rather than meeting set limits. These are available on the website.

### **Item 12.2 – Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources – Leesa Carson**

Leesa Carson advised that the steering group for the Uranium Industry Framework had its 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in Canberra and had agreed on the approach for the report which had been finalised and was due to be presented to Minister MacFarlane by the end of month.

### **Item 12.3 Northern Land Council – Mark Foy**

nil reported.

### **Item 12.4 – Parks Australia North – Julian Barry**

Julian Barry advised ARRAC members that Parks Australia North had new Assistant Secretary, Ann-Marie Delahunt. Ann-Marie had transferred from the Approvals and Wildlife Division (DEH).

## **Item 12.5 – NT Department of Health and Community Services – Xavier Schobben;**

Xavier Schobben informed ARRAC members of the progress of the

- National Directory for Radiation Protection

Edition 1.0 is expected to be replaced by edition 2 in the near future. The second edition is relevant to this committee because it is expected to cover radiation protection in mining, which was not covered in edition 1. The practical outcome of inclusion is that radiation protection in all mining operations, where appropriate, must be covered by the Code of Practice for Radiation Protection and Radioactive Waste Management in Mining and Mineral Processing (2005).

Members of the committee may view a copy of this code at the following location:  
[http://www.arpansa.gov.au/rps\\_pubs.htm](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/rps_pubs.htm)

Members may be interested in providing comment on edition 2 and, when open, public comment may be sought from the following location:  
[http://www.arpansa.gov.au/for\\_comm.htm](http://www.arpansa.gov.au/for_comm.htm)

- Legislation

Public comment is now closed on the first draft of regulations for the Radiation Protection Act 2004. This Act is in accordance with edition 1 of the National Directory.

As advised previously, the Radiation Protection Act 2004 does not apply to any part of uranium mining. However, where appropriate and according to the scope of the mining and milling code, the new Act may have relevance to other mining operations.

## **Item 12.6 – Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts – Michael Lawton**

nil reported

## **Item 12.7 Other members reports**

*Traditional Owners Response to the Ranger First Pass Closure – Geoff Kyle (Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation)*

Geoff Kyle advised that a response to the ERA Closure Model had been drafted after extensive consultation with Mirarr TOs. The document would be completed and distributed to RPA stakeholders at ARRTC-18 in October, 2006.

Geoff Kyle noted that Mirarr TOs were pleased with many aspects of the model, but had reservations about a number of aspects. Those would be addressed in future iterations and at the proposed Mula II consultation later in 2006

## **Item 13 – Other Business**

*13.1 – Display of ARRAC membership details on website – Carolyn Lord*

Approval was sought for the ARRAC membership details (name, role and organisation) to be placed on the public ARRAC website.

<b>Action: No objections were raised – Carolyn Lord to place current membership onto website</b>
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*13.2 – Yellowcake Country? Australia’s uranium industry – Emma King*

Emma King tabled the publication *Yellowcake Country? Australia’s uranium industry* (A Beyond Nuclear Initiative (BNI) publications)

*13.3 – Duplication in ARRAC presentations*

Discussion was held on the duplication of chemistry data presented by DPIFM, SSD and ERA, Considering statutory reporting requirements, a suggestion made that a pre-ARRAC meeting occur between presenters to coordinate the presentation of this data. This is to reduce replication of data in presentations, noting that if a difference in data occurs this is to be highlighted. Michael Lawton commented that he appreciated the three different presentations and Geoff Kyle advised he had no problem with the suggestion as the separate information can be obtained for their separate reports.

**Action: Presenters for DPIFM, SSD and ERA will discuss their presentations prior to the ARRAC meeting to reduce repetitive presentations**

**Item 14 –Next meeting**

**Action: Carolyn Lord to coordinate**

Meeting Closed: 1450pm