

Review of mine-related  
research in the Alligator  
Rivers Region

1978–2002:

Prepared for ARRTC9 meeting,  
25–27 February 2002



A Johnston & AR Milnes



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It is SSD policy for reports in the SSR series to be reviewed as part of the publications process. This SSR is a review of mine-related research in the Alligator Rivers Region 1978-2002 and has been reviewed internally by senior SSD and EWLS staff.

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# Preface

Staff of the Supervising Scientist Division (SSD) and Earth Water Life Sciences (EWLS) have worked hard at providing this summary of research requested by the members of the Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee at the ARRTC8 meeting on 8–9 December 2001. However, in its current form, the report needs to be considered a draft document. The task proved greater than most of us anticipated and the Christmas/New Year break certainly made it difficult to complete the task in the short time since the previous meeting.

As stated in the Introduction, what we have attempted to do is:

- Identify the major fields in which research has been necessary in the region to ensure that the environment of the region is protected from the effects of uranium mining,
- Summarise the major issues or problem areas in these fields and the scope of studies carried out,
- Summarise the principal outcomes for operation of mining in the region and for subsequent rehabilitation of mine sites
- Identify issues that still require scientific research to either ensure ongoing environmental protection to a very high standard during mining operations or to ensure rehabilitation of mine sites to the standard demanded by governments and the community.

To a large extent the first three of these tasks have been achieved but the current text is clearly a multi-authored document. Because there has been insufficient time for us to edit and restructure individual contributions, the review at the moment lacks the type of consistency of approach that we would prefer to achieve.

The fourth task listed above was the identification of issues requiring future research. While most contributors have tackled this task, there has been insufficient time to allow us to bring these proposals together in a final chapter in which we assess the various proposals, identify possible omissions, and present to ARRTC a consolidated ERA/SSD view that could form the basis of discussion at ARRTC on the future development of our respective research programs.

In addition, the reference list is extensive and includes many cases where multiple papers by the same authors have been published. Careful checking of these is still required.

For these reasons, we suggest that discussions at the ARRTC9 meeting on 25–27 February 2002 should concentrate on those aspects of the current report that describe past programs of research rather than focussing too much at this stage on the issue of prioritising future research. We intend continuing work on the report over the next month or so and then publishing the report in the Supervising Scientist's report series. The question of prioritising future research could then be addressed at the next ARRTC meeting. We will welcome discussion of this proposed approach at the ARRTC9 meeting on 25–27 February 2002.

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19 February 2002

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