

Ranger uranium mine is closing, what happens next?

What is the Ranger mine? – A 40-year-old uranium mine surrounded by the World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park. The mine is owned by Energy Resources Australia which now needs to rehabilitate the site. The mine contains harmful radioactive waste and if not rehabilitated properly, **Kakadu National Park could be irreversibly damaged** and Australian taxpayers could be hit with a repair bill of **hundreds of millions of dollars**.

**Can
it be
done?**



What is the plan?

Radioactive waste from the Ranger uranium mine is required by law to be isolated from the environment for at least 10,000 years. During the rehabilitation project toxic waste from the mine will be moved from large dams into empty mine pits on site. These pits will then be covered in a layer of contaminated rock and another layer of clean rock.

Who pays?

Energy Resources Australia (ERA) owns and runs the Ranger mine. ERA is majority owned by Rio Tinto. ERA's clean-up fund is around \$300 million less than the predicted project cost. If ERA can't finish the job, and Rio doesn't meet its responsibilities, then taxpayers will likely foot the bill.

What is ERA's track-record?

The history of mine rehabilitation in Australia is bleak, with over 50,000 abandoned mine sites across the country. ERA's running of the Ranger mine has been very problematic. Since 1979, there have been close to 1,000 spills, breaches and incidents at the mine. We need to make sure the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

What is missing from the plan?

ERA's plan lacks detail on money and monitoring. It's also lacking worst-case scenario modelling including around waste leakage and climate damage. The Kakadu region is predicted to experience rapid sea-level rise. Flood plains will be inundated with sea water, and flooding of the buried waste could mean contamination in Kakadu.

What happens if the plan fails?

Without an enforceable plan for rehabilitation, irreversible damage could be done to Kakadu National Park. The health and wellbeing of the Traditional Owners, the Mirarr people could be impacted. The Northern Territory and Australian governments and taxpayers could also be up for a repair bill of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Is there hope?

Always! This is an important opportunity to move the goal posts for mine rehabilitation in Australia and the world. Rio Tinto's reputation as a responsible corporate citizen and its license to operate is at stake. ACF supports Mirarr in their work to protect country and to develop a vibrant post-mining regional economy.