



Australian Government

**Department of Resources
Energy and Tourism**

Rum Jungle mine site – environmental rehabilitation

The former Rum Jungle mine site is located 85 kilometres south of Darwin in the headwaters of the East Finniss River. Operating between 1954 and 1971, Rum Jungle was Australia's first major uranium mine, producing approximately 3,500 tonnes of uranium. In addition, the site also produced some 20,000 tonnes of copper concentrate, and smaller quantities of nickel and lead.

Mining at the site has led to significant environmental impacts, primarily due to acid mine drainage and heavy metal mobilisation, leading to pollution of the East Finniss River and public health hazards. Localised concentrations of radioactive tailings presented a potential radiological hazard.

From 1983 to 1986, Rum Jungle was rehabilitated under an \$18.6 million cooperative agreement between the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments. The original objectives of the rehabilitation project were to:

- achieve a major reduction in surface water pollution, hence reducing downstream heavy metal loads;
- reduce the pollutant loads in the two open cut water bodies;
- reduce public health hazards, including radiological hazards; and
- implement aesthetic measures, including revegetation.

Initial monitoring activities indicated that the rehabilitation program met its original objectives, but the gradual deterioration of the site's historic reclamation works has been documented over a number of years.

The Budget provides \$8.3 million over four years to support the environmental management and monitoring of Rum Jungle, in cooperation with the Northern Territory Government.

Funds have been made available to undertake site maintenance activities to prevent the further deterioration of the historic reclamation works, while promoting their effectiveness. Additionally, comprehensive scientific investigations conducted at the site will inform the development of site management and rehabilitation strategies.

Consultation with affected communities and industry about the site will contribute to and inform these activities. Engagement of the site's traditional Aboriginal owners is of particular importance, recognising the site's social and cultural importance to them.