



Koongarra protected forever

Julia Gillard and Labor
Let's move Australia forward



KOONGARRA PROTECTED FOREVER

Protecting Koongarra

Koongarra is an area of native woodland of great environmental and cultural significance, located within the boundaries of Kakadu National Park.

Koongarra was previously excluded from the Park because of its potential to be the site for a uranium mine.

Koongarra will now be protected by incorporating it into Kakadu National Park in accordance with the clearly expressed wishes of the Traditional Owner, for the benefit of all Australians.

The Traditional Owner, through the Northern Land Council, has clearly stated his wish that the land be included in Kakadu National Park, and that as a consequence, has waived his interest in Koongarra as a mining lease.

The incorporation of this land into World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park is all part of the Gillard Labor Government's commitment to protect our environment, protect our quality of life and to build a sustainable Australia.

The decision will prevent uranium mining and preserve Koongarra's environmental and cultural treasures forever.

Why we are doing this

Koongarra was excluded from Kakadu's boundaries in 1979 because of its potential uranium resources.

Like Kakadu, Koongarra is a living cultural landscape, with the same World Heritage values as the rest of Kakadu. Covering some 1,228 hectares, Koongarra includes a rich mix of native animals and lush plant life overlooked by Nourlangie Rock, one of Kakadu's most popular visitor destinations. The escarpment also

includes ancient rock art galleries that date back tens of thousands of years, first settlement paintings, and sacred burial sites. Koongarra is a spectacular place, and a fitting addition to Kakadu National Park.

Under the Land Rights Act, the approval of the Traditional Owners is required before the grant of any interest in exploration or mining on the Koongarra area.

Mining company Koongarra Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of the French nuclear power company AREVA NC, has outstanding applications for exploration licences and mineral leases over Koongarra, some dating back decades. These applications have never been granted.

The Traditional Owners have never permitted exploration or mining at Koongarra, and this year the Northern Land Council wrote to Minister Garrett to advise that the Traditional Owner does not and will not support mining of the Koongarra deposit, and to formally seek incorporation of the land into Kakadu.

For three decades there has been strong support from a range of community organisations and World Heritage bodies for Koongarra to be included in the Park.

The Northern Territory Government has also made clear that that Koongarra should be integrated into Kakadu on the basis that the future for the area is in tourism rather than mining.

What Federal Labor will do

If re-elected, the Government will protect Koongarra, honor the wishes of the Traditional Owner and incorporate the land into Kakadu National Park.

This would mean that mining would be prohibited under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).

The mining company which has in the past sought to progress mining interests in this area, Koongarra Pty Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of the French multinational AREVA NC, would be prohibited from carrying out exploration or mining activities in Kakadu.

Economic benefits will flow to local Indigenous communities, the tourism industry and the national economy from ongoing visitation to the area, one of Australia's most iconic national parks.

There are also clear environmental benefits from this decision, as the delicate ecosystems of the area will be a part of the larger national park system and not subject to any mining activities.

Once Koongarra becomes part of Kakadu, the park rangers will expand their conservation work to include this new area. Traditional Owners will continue to exercise their responsibilities to look after their country, caring for it as they have for generations.

When and how will Koongarra become part of Kakadu?

Koongarra is Aboriginal land, so to become part of Kakadu it will need to be first leased to the Director of National Parks. The proclamation that created Kakadu National Park will need to be amended with another proclamation by the Governor-General, covering the Koongarra area.

Will Koongarra become part of the Kakadu World Heritage Area?

It is fitting that this spectacular area becomes part of the Kakadu World Heritage Area, and if the Gillard Labor Government is re-elected, it will be applying to the World Heritage Committee for this to occur.

World Heritage listing recognises places of outstanding heritage value, the conservation of which are important for current and future generations.

Sites that are nominated for World Heritage listing are placed on the list only after they have been assessed as representing the best examples of the world's cultural and natural heritage. Australia currently has 18 properties on the World Heritage List.

Recent studies show our 18 World Heritage properties generate \$12 billion annually and support over 120,000 jobs across the country.

What is the position of the mining company?

Before making a decision about the future of Koongarra, the Government consulted with the mining company (based in France) in accordance with the requirements of procedural fairness. The Government took the company's views into account when making its decision.

Notwithstanding the company's commercial interest in exploiting the resources at the site, Koongarra could never have been mined without the permission of its Aboriginal owners, and they have been very clear that they would not allow this to happen.

As there has been no exploration activity in the Koongarra area for over two decades, and no mining has ever occurred there, no jobs will be lost as a result of this decision.

Does the Australian Government oppose uranium mining generally?

The Australian Government is committed to comprehensive environmental assessment and stringent environmental controls on all uranium mines, based on world's best practice standards.

There are currently three uranium mines operating in Australia, with the expansion of one of those mines approved last year.

Does the NT Government support this decision?

Yes. The Northern Territory Government has publicly expressed its opposition to mining at Koongarra.

THE LIBERALS' RECORD

- ✘ The Liberals failed the environment for 12 long years.
- ✘ The Liberals have long talked about Koongarra, but in 12 years they never did anything about it.
- ✘ As far back as 1998, the World Heritage Committee recommended the Australian Government seek the Aboriginal owner's consent to include Koongarra in Kakadu. The former Coalition Government never found the time to progress the matter.

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