

NOTICE OF DECISION AND STATEMENT OF REASONS

Section 55 of the *Environment Protection Act 2019* (EP Act)
Regulations 57(2)(a) and 63(1) of the *Environment Protection Regulations 2020* (EP Regulations)

Notice of decision

Name of proposed action Koongarra Remediation Project

Proponent Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water,
Office of the Supervising Scientist

NT EPA reference EP2025/047

Nature of the proposed action Rehabilitation and Remediation

Description of proposed action

The proposed action is to remediate the Koongarra site, a legacy uranium exploration site located in Kakadu National Park, 250 km east of Darwin and 22 km south of Jabiru Township.

The proposed action involves the removal and relocation of Koongarra source material, which consists of uranium core samples, core trays and crushed samples, from the Koongarra site. The Koongarra source material will be relocated to the Jabiru Field Station (JFS), located on the Ranger Mine Mineral Lease, for temporary storage until a permanent storage or disposal solution is determined. The proposed action has three key components:

1. Access track works – refurbishment of the existing access track from the Kubarra Pools carpark to the Koongarra site.
2. Removal of the Koongarra source material – repackaging the material into 205 L sealed drums which will then be placed into sea containers for transportation to the JFS for storage.
3. Removal of legacy exploration infrastructure – decommissioning of groundwater bores and exploration drill holes, removal of legacy exploration camp infrastructure such as old sheds, pickets and concrete slabs, and transportation to an appropriately licensed facility.

At completion of the relocation of the Koongarra source material and the decommissioning and disposal of legacy infrastructure, the site will be left to naturally revegetate and integrate into the surrounding Kakadu National Park.

Person authorised to make decision Dr Paul Vogel AM, Chairperson, Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)

Delegate of the NT EPA under section 36 of the *Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012*.

Decision **The proposed action does not have the potential to have a significant impact on the environment** (section 55 of the EP Act).

Environmental impact assessment is not required in accordance with regulation 57(2)(a) of the EP Regulations.

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Signature



Date of decision

04 February 2026

Matters considered under
EP Regulation 56

The NT EPA has considered the following:

- the accepted referral (including the referral form, referral report and appendices)
- submissions received (under EP Regulations 52 and 53) in relation to the accepted referral.

No additional information was requested under EP Regulation 40.

Consultation

Submission period: 25 November 2025 – 23 December 2025

Submissions received:

- public submissions: 1
- government authority submissions: 5

Submissions are available on the [NT EPA website](#).

Statement of reasons

Overview

Kakadu National Park is a place of ecological and biological diversity, and a dual-listed World Heritage Site for both cultural and natural outstanding universal values. The proposed action has the potential to impact environmental values associated with four environmental factors. The potential impacts are not considered significant, due to the reasons outlined below.

Land

Terrestrial Environmental Quality

The proposed action overlies predominantly shallow, gravelly, earthy sands and sandy earths with substantial areas of deep gravel-free siliceous sands. These sandy soils are susceptible to erosion where disturbance has occurred.

The proposed action involves minor, temporary ground disturbance associated with refurbishment of an existing access track, removal of legacy infrastructure, and decommissioning of historical bores and drill holes within a previously disturbed former exploration area.

The referral identifies that the existing access track crosses four ephemeral streams, however as works will occur during the dry season, potential erosion and sedimentation impacts from the use of creek crossings are not considered to be significant. Limited clearing of overhead vegetation and clearing of verges and track shoulders will be undertaken using selective methods as required, along with sheeting of existing hardened surfaces. Existing erosion along the Koongarra Saddle access track are to be rectified during the works.

All works will remain within the approved access track footprint in accordance with the conditions of existing statutory authorisations. Potential risks relating to erosion and sediment mobilisation are limited by confining works to an existing formed track, scheduling works during the dry season, implementing standard erosion and sediment controls, and stabilisation of disturbance to allow natural revegetation following completion of works.

Repackaging and transport of the Koongarra source material will be regulated by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) under the *Australian Radiation*

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Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998. Transport will follow the relevant requirements of ARPANSA's Radiation Protection Series C-2 Code for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material. The source material will be repackaged into 205 L sealed drums which will be stored in sea containers. The radioactive material in the sea containers will be stored at JFS, where the storage of the source material will be licensed and regulated by ARPANSA to meet applicable codes and standards for radiation protection. Regulatory approval from ARPANSA will be required before the material can be stored at JFS. All other listed waste material (including asbestos containing material) that is not contaminated with residual radioactive material will be transported by a licensed contractor and disposed of at an appropriately licensed facility, in accordance with the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998* (WMPC Act).

The referral does not identify the potential for residual non-radioactive contamination of the site following infrastructure removal. If non-radioactive contamination is identified at the completion of works, testing and remediation in accordance with the WMPC Act and the *National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure 1999* (as amended in 2013) (ASC NEPM) standards will apply. Under the WMPC Act, if known or suspected contamination is reported, the NT EPA can require assessment, and if necessary, remediation, to treat, contain, remove or manage contamination.

The NT EPA considers that the potential significant impacts to terrestrial environmental quality can be avoided and mitigated, and regulated through other statutory decision-making processes that includes regulation under the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* (the Radiation Management Plan and Monitoring Plan) by ARPANSA.

Terrestrial ecosystems

Environmental values relevant to terrestrial ecosystems include native vegetation, fauna habitat, ecological connectivity and the capacity for disturbed areas to recover and reintegrate within the surrounding savanna woodland landscape of Kakadu National Park.

The proposed action is located in a previously disturbed exploration site now populated mainly by grasses and sparse trees. The proposed actions involve a disturbance area of 6.55 ha where vegetation will be flattened, rather than mechanically cleared and stripped, and selectively pruned where required to facilitate movement of vehicles along the access track and between legacy features, and infrastructure removal. All disturbed areas, with the exception of the access track at the request of a Traditional Owner, is intended to naturally regenerate following completion of works.

The proponent's desktop likelihood of occurrence (LOO) assessment determined that, given the limited size and extent of disturbance, the proposed disturbance area is not considered to contain critical habitat for any threatened flora or fauna species. No threatened savanna woodland species with restricted distributions or high sensitivity to disturbance are known to occur in this region.

The Flora and Fauna Division advised that the area is already disturbed, the nature and scale of potential impacts is minor, the proposed action poses a low risk to the terrestrial environment and biodiversity.

One species assessed in the assessment as having a high likelihood of occurring within the disturbance area is the Partridge Pigeon (*Geophaps smithii smithii*). However, this species is a habitat generalist and is expected to utilise the extensive surrounding savanna woodland in the same manner as the Proposal area. Additionally, the relatively large home range of the Partridge Pigeon means it is likely to regularly use habitat beyond the Proposal footprint.

Weed and dust risks associated with temporary disturbance will be managed in accordance with the *Weeds Management Act 2001* and standard site management practices including the use of bore water for dust suppression.

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Given the limited spatial extent, temporary nature of disturbance and restorative intent of the proposed action, it is not expected to result in a significant impact on terrestrial ecosystems. The NT EPA considers that the potential impacts on terrestrial ecosystems would not be significant.

People

Culture and heritage

The proponent identified that the proposed action has the potential to impact areas of cultural heritage significance during the works, including Aboriginal sacred sites, Aboriginal archaeological features, and cultural landscape features and connections within the main proposal area as well as in the extension area.

The proponent has obtained an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* (Sacred Sites Act) for the proposed action main project areas (Authority Certificate C2024/051) and the certificate identifies several sacred sites and restricted work areas. The scope of working near the sites, and access to these sites is limited. Certificate C2024/051 includes specific conditions around the protection of sacred sites that the proponent has committed to comply with. For the extension areas identified in the referral, an authority certificate application is under assessment by AAPA.

To ensure the protection of heritage places and objects, the proponent has also committed to an archaeological survey between the Kubara carpark turnoff and the Koongarra Proposal area. Additionally, the proponent has committed to engaging a subject matter expert to develop a Cultural Heritage Management Plan and a Rock Art Protection Plan, with specific methodology and details regarding protection measures. An unexpected finds protocol will also be implemented into the works plan.

Kakadu National Park is on Bininj/Mungguy land and is inscribed on the World Heritage List under the World Heritage Convention for its outstanding natural and cultural values. The remediation works will support the restoration of the natural landscape in the proposal area and allow for a cohesive reintegration of disturbed areas back into the surrounding national park. These works also contribute to restoring cultural values and strengthening connection to the proposal area. Consultation between the proponent, Northern Land Council and Traditional Owners was undertaken to inform the remediation works and protection of sacred sites.

Implementation of the proposed avoidance and mitigation measures committed to in the referral, and regulation under other statutory decision-making processes (*Heritage Act 2011*, *Sacred Sites Act*), would ensure that the proposed action will not have a significant impact on culture and heritage values.

Human Health

The nearest public area to the Proposal area is the Burrungkuy (Nourlangie) carpark located 2 km west of the Proposal area. The JFS is located approximately 6.65 km from Jabiru and 500 m from the Jabiru Airport. There is no public access to the JFS site or the Proposal area. The proposed action involves the handling, transport and temporary storage of low activity naturally occurring radioactive material associated with historical uranium exploration. The radioactive Koongarra source material is considered to have low activity levels. However, the source material may pose a risk to human health if not properly managed.

The handling, transport and storage of radioactive Koongarra source material will be regulated under the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* by ARPANSA. A Radiation Management Plan and Monitoring Plan is required to be approved by the ARPANSA CEO prior to undertaking any works, under section 63 of the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Regulations 2018*. This plan will detail the requirements of a radiation clearance survey which will be completed following removal of the source material. A survey will also be completed at the Koongarra laydown area. If any residual radioactive contamination is detected, it will be removed for disposal with the source material.

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The packaging, transport and storage of the radioactive Koongarra source material is regulated by ARPANSA under the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998* and will be undertaken in accordance with ARPANSA licensing requirements, approved radiation management and monitoring plans, and the Code for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Material.

The Proposal area and storage locations are not publicly accessible, and the JFS storage area will be within a fenced and locked compound. Radiation clearance surveys of the proposal area and laydown area will be undertaken following removal of materials, with any residual contamination managed in accordance with ARPANSA regulatory requirements.

Given the low activity of the material, the controlled nature of the works, the secured storage containers and location, and the application of established Commonwealth radiation protection controls, the proposed action is not expected to result in a significant impact to human health.

In accordance with section 55(4) of the *Environment Protection Act 2019*, the NT EPA may consider other statutory decision-making processes that may mitigate the potential environmental impact of the referred action. The NT EPA has considered the functions and regulatory responsibilities of the relevant statutory authorities and is satisfied that the proposed action can be appropriately regulated and managed by these authorities. The works will be regulated under:

- the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998*,
- the *Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Regulations 2018* (ARPANSA's Radiation Protection Series C-2 Code)
- the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998*
- the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*
- the *Heritage Act 2011*, and
- the *Weeds Management Act 2001*.

Furthermore, on 30 January 2026, the Commonwealth decided under sections 75 and 77A the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) that the referred Koongarra Remediation Project ([EPBC 2025/10369](#)) is not a controlled action if undertaken in a particular manner. The notification of referral decision details the particular manner specific to the action, and because the proposed action is a nuclear action (section 21 and 22A), and a Commonwealth action, (section 28), these measures must be taken to avoid significant impacts on the environment. The Koongarra Remediation Project must be undertaken in accordance with the referral information, and at the completion of rehabilitation activities, the site will undergo natural revegetation and monitoring. The site will be incorporated back into the surrounding natural environment in the long term as requested by the Traditional Owner, and in line with the [Kakadu National Park Management Plan 2016-26](#).

Other environmental factors

The NT EPA considered other environmental factors during its consideration of the referral; however, the potential impacts on environmental values associated with those factors were not considered to have the potential to be significant.

Conclusion

The NT EPA has determined that the Koongarra Remediation Project proposed by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Office of the Supervising Scientist, does not have the potential for a significant impact on the environment. This is due to:

- the context, low intensity, short duration, small magnitude and limited geographic extent of the potential impacts
- the sensitivity, value and quality of the environment that would be impacted

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- the inclusion of well-established avoidance, mitigation, and management measures in the design, planning, construction and operational phases of the proposed action, and
- other statutory decision-making processes that may mitigate the potential environmental impact of the proposed action.

Environmental impact assessment of the proposed action is not required.

In making its decision under section 55 of the EP Act and regulation 57 of the EP Regulations, the NT EPA has considered:

- the accepted referral and submissions made under regulation 52 and 53 (regulation 56 of the EP Regulations)
 - the objects of the Act (section 3 of the EP Act)
 - the purpose of the environmental impact assessment process (section 42 of the EP Act).
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