

4 STATUTORY COMMITTEES

4.1 Introduction

The Supervising Scientist Division participates in, and provides secretariat and administrative support to, two statutory committees. These committees play important roles in facilitating discussion and consultation on environmental protection issues and in providing peer review of the scientific work of the Division.

4.2 Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee

The Alligator Rivers Region Advisory Committee (ARRAC) was established under the *Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978* to promote communication between the community and government and industry stakeholders on environmental issues associated with uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers Region.

ARRAC is chaired by Professor Charles Webb, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) at Charles Darwin University.

ARRAC offers a valuable forum for stakeholders to exchange views and relevant information on the issues that relate to environmental protection and rehabilitation from the effects of uranium mining.

A key function of ARRAC is to provide transparency in the processes applied to protect the people and environment in the region from the potential impacts of uranium mining.

Public disclosure of environmental performance data is a useful way to enhance trust within the group, thereby reducing the potential for misinformation. Information that is regularly provided to stakeholders through ARRAC meetings includes a summary and interpretation of monitoring data, periodic environmental reports from the mining companies, and audit outcomes for the mines.

A link to the summary records of previous meetings is available on the ARRAC web site at www.deh.gov.au/ssd/communication/committees/arrac/index.html.

ARRAC met twice during 2005–06: in Jabiru in December 2005 and in Darwin in February 2006. Issues discussed during these meetings included:

- water management issues at the Ranger mine, including the status of the Potable Water Treatment Plant;
- the results of chemical, biological and radiological monitoring for Ranger and Jabiluka;
- the outcomes of environmental audits and assessments of Ranger, Nabarlek and Jabiluka;
- the outcomes of Minesite Technical Committee (MTC) meetings;
- ARRTC's Key Knowledge Needs;
- the status of South Alligator Valley mine rehabilitation.

4.3 Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee

The Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee (ARRTC) was established under sections 22A–22F of the *Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978*.

The primary aim of the Committee is to ensure that the quality of the science used in the research into, and assessment of, the protection of the environment from the impacts of uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers Region is of an appropriately high standard. This involves review of research activities by *eriss*, ERA and other organisations. It also involves the review of the quality of the science used by *oss* and DPIFM to assess and approve proposals by uranium mining companies in the Alligator Rivers Region.

ARRTC reports openly, independently and without restriction. A link to the outcomes of previous ARRTC meetings is available on the ARRTC web site at www.deh.gov.au/ssd/communication/committees/arrtc/index.html.

ARRTC's membership is appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, and consists of:

- Independent scientific members with specific expertise (including ARRTC's chair), appointed following nomination by the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS);
- Representatives of the Northern Land Council, the Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry, Fisheries and Mines, Energy Resources of Australia Ltd (for Ranger and Jabiluka), Hanson Pty Ltd (for Nabarlek) and Parks Australia North;
- The Supervising Scientist.

ARRTC is chaired by Mr Ray Evans, who succeeded Professor Barry Hart who retired from the role in September 2005. Mr Evans was an existing independent member of ARRTC.



Figure 4.1 ARRTC members with the Director of *eriss* and ERA staff at monitoring point **G8210009** downstream of the Ranger mine – September 2005

Professor Jon Nott was appointed to ARRTC on 5 August 2005, replacing Professor Gerald Nanson who resigned in March 2005.

Dr Keith Hayes was appointed to ARRTC on 25 January 2006, filling the vacancy left as a result of Professor Barry Hart's resignation.

ARRTC met twice during 2005–06: from 31 August to 2 September 2005 (ARRTC's sixteenth meeting) and from 27 to 28 February 2006 (ARRTC's seventeenth meeting).

Both meetings were held in Darwin.

At these meetings, ARRTC considered and discussed a wide range of issues, including:

- the research activities conducted by *eriss* and ERA, in the context of the Key Knowledge Needs;
- the chemical, biological and radiological monitoring activities being conducted by DPIFM, ERA and the Supervising Scientist;
- specific issues relating to Ranger, Jabiluka and Nabarlek;
- the status of South Alligator Valley rehabilitation activities;
- updates from the various stakeholders represented at ARRTC.

ARRTC's Key Knowledge Needs are an important input into prioritising and planning future research activities, and will provide the basis for mining-related research activities. They are included at Appendix 1 of this Annual Report.