

Jabiru handed to Indigenous owners the Mirarr people after long-running native title dispute

Former uranium mine town will become a hub to support Kakadu tourism with investment from federal and territory governments



Ubirr Rock at sunset in Kakadu national park. The NT town of Jabiru, built in 1982 for the Ranger mine, has been handed over to traditional owners the Mirarr.

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A town built to support a Northern Territory uranium mine has been handed over to Indigenous land owners, ending a long-running native title dispute.

The federal environment minister, Sussan Ley, and the minister for Indigenous Australians, Ken Wyatt, have formally handed the Kakadu community of Jabiru to the Mirarr people.

The town, built in 1982 to support the Ranger uranium mine, will now become a hub to support Kakadu tourism with investment from the federal and territory governments.

Wyatt officially issued the title document to senior traditional owners on Saturday.

Ley said the formal handover ahead of an agreed settlement date of 30 June represented “months of good-faith negotiations by all parties and reflects a long-term government commitment”.

“Today marks the start of a new chapter and a bright future for Jabiru,” she said in a statement.

“One which sees Mirarr ownership and management of the land which they have been the custodians of for generations and supports the preservation of the cultural and natural values of Kakadu national park.

“This is a proud day in Australia’s history.”

Wyatt said the granting of Jabiru as Aboriginal land and the start of the new township lease held by a local Indigenous organisation, demonstrated what could be achieved by working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

He said the transition of Jabiru would give traditional owners economic security and control of decision-making needed to build a prosperous future.

Jabiru was established to provide housing and services to support the adjacent Ranger mine, which ceased operations in January.

It will be developed as a tourism and regional services hub for Kakadu and the West Arnhem region.

The federal government will invest \$35m directly into the town for a range of remediation measures, beautification projects, upgrades and commissioned public artwork.