

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

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Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
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Programme: Science Division
Topic: Landform Modelling
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Senator Ludlam, asked:

Senator LUDLAM: Given that we are a bit short of time, are you able to provide us on notice with a summary of where the process is up to at the moment, who the key players are and what OSS sees as the next steps? In the past we have had some quite hypothetical discussions about what happens if mining ceases on site. I hope you would agree that they have become much less hypothetical, even in the last few weeks.

Mr McAllister: In terms of scope in relation to what activities are occurring for closure?

Senator LUDLAM: Yes.

Answer:

Rehabilitation related activities at Ranger commenced some time ago, including the backfilling of Pits 1 and 3 with tailings, the installation of a dredge to move tailings from the tailings dam to Pit 3 and the construction of a brine concentrator to treat and dispose of process water.

The development of closure criteria is the responsibility of the mine operator, Energy Resources of Australia Ltd. The role of the Supervising Scientist is to provide technical advice in the development of closure criteria.

There are technical working groups comprised of relevant stakeholders, the regulator and the mining company overseen by the Ranger Minesite Technical Committee.

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy are co-chairing the Ranger Intergovernmental Taskforce on Closure which provides coordinated, whole of government oversight of the closure process including the development of closure criteria. This taskforce includes representatives from the Supervising Scientist and Geoscience Australia.

These closure criteria will be approved by both the Commonwealth Resources Minister and the Northern Territory Resources Minister with the advice of the Supervising Scientist.