

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**  
Budget Estimates, May 2013

<b>Program: Division:</b>	Supervising Scientist	<b>Question No:</b>	205
<b>Topic:</b>	Supervising Scientist - Senate Report into the adequacy of federal regulation of uranium mining		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	64 (29/05/13)		

**Senator Ludlam asked:**

Senator LUDLAM: The report was actually highly critical of the regulatory regime at Ranger. It described it as complex and inadequate. Could you provide detail on how OSS has addressed the recommendations of that inquiry as they had bearing specifically on the Ranger operation?

Dr Dripps: We would appreciate the opportunity to take that question on notice, Senator. I do recall extensive conversations with Mr Hughes about this and I think previous evidence on this that we would like to be able to refer to to ensure that we are not contradicting ourselves.

Senator LUDLAM: That would be good. If you could take it on notice, I might be a bit more specific in my questions relating to it. As I say, it is approaching 10 years and it would be fantastic to get a review and some sort of response from the OSS and/or the department, if that is seen to be appropriate. If you are going to take these on notice, are there any recommendations pertinent to the operations of the OSS or Ranger that have not been advanced or responded to by the government? I might be directing this somewhat to the minister.

Dr Dripps: My understanding is that there are not but that it is a very complicated story to point out the events that were occurring at the same time through which those recommendations were fully addressed. But that is a recollection, Senator, and we would prefer to take the question on notice.

**Answer:**

The status of the report remains unchanged from the response provided in October 2012, as detailed below.

The Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee's 2003 report: *Regulating the Ranger, Jabiluka, Beverley and Honeymoon uranium mines* was overtaken by the previous government's response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources report: *Australia's uranium: Greenhouse friendly fuel for an energy hungry world*, tabled on 29 March 2007.

However, a number of the recommendations from the 2003 report have been addressed by Ranger uranium mine regulatory arrangements and associated institutional, monitoring and reporting activities implemented since that time. These include:

- Representation of Mirrar interests through the membership of the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation on the Ranger and Jabiluka Minesite Technical Committees (Recommendation 1)
- Development of a Mining Management Plan for Ranger which is subject to annual review by stakeholders (Recommendation 2)
- The roles and responsibilities of the relevant government parties are clearly defined under the current Working Arrangements, and associated compliance (enforcement) and information policies and procedures are in place (Recommendations 2, 3 and 4)
- Energy Resources of Australia Ltd environment management systems at Ranger are ISO 14001 certified (Recommendation 5)
- SSD undertakes continuous monitoring and public reporting of surface water quality data during the wet season and ERA undertakes extensive groundwater modelling and monitoring, including around Pit#1 and the Tailings Storage Facility (Recommendations 6, 9 and 11)
- The Alligator Rivers Region Technical Committee reviews the appropriateness and quality of scientific research informing current regulatory processes, as well as operational, rehabilitation and closure planning at Ranger. (Recommendation 10)
- There is increasing research focus on the efficiency and use of wetland filters at Ranger during the operational and post closure phases (Recommendation 12)