



## ORIENTATION

### Good progress at Dampier

ROBERT G. BEDNARIK

The campaign to save the rock art complex of the Dampier Archipelago in Western Australia has made excellent progress from mid-2006 to mid-2007. In June of last year, the film *Sacred stones*, illustrating the plight of the vast rock art concentration, was shown on Australian national television and reportedly seen by over two million Australians. This and numerous other media reports effected not only a sharp rise in public interest, it also precipitated the emergence of several new advocacy and support groups, such as the recently formed Friends of Australian Rock Art.

This groundswell of public support has prompted several changes for the better. A number of prominent politicians, representing the entire political spectrum, have joined the campaign, several of them travelling to the sites to assess their importance personally. For instance the Federal Minister for the Environment was taken to Dampier sites by me, as were the Leader of the Greens and several other key parliamentarians. The media campaign, begun in 2002, has continued unabated: the Dampier Campaign has now prompted well over a thousand reports in the printed and electronic media, in Australia and abroad. These have been universally positive and can be fairly described as favouring the protection of the cultural heritage. Despite the continuing determination of the state government of Western Australia not to yield on this issue, our Campaign has chalked up a long list of successes over the past five years, even though it has not yet secured a 'final victory'. One of the most recent significant successes has been the decision, on 3 July 2007, of the federal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, to accept my nomination of 22 March 2004 of the Dampier Archipelago to the National Heritage List. Though this will only protect *most* of the land area nominated (241 km<sup>2</sup> of the nominated 270 km<sup>2</sup>), the protected area does include West Intercourse Island, which houses the archipelago's second largest corpus of rock art and which had been under threat of industrialisation for some years (see Fig. 1).

The practical effect of this listing is that, firstly, the area still available for new industries is now limited to a few parcels of land, which means that henceforth

the Campaign can focus on these specific hotspots. At present, this concerns particularly two allotments near Holden Point (between King and Withnell Bays) called Sites A and B, earmarked for the \$12 billion Pluto plant. This has become a test case and if the Campaign can make further inroads into the plans of the Department of Industry and Resources (which already are severely curtailed now), it is doubtful that any other proponent would take up the offer to establish a new plant at Dampier. Indeed, two major companies have already decided to build their huge industrial complexes elsewhere: BHP Billiton, the world's largest mining firm, has decided to relocate its planned LNG facility to Onslow, and Apache Energy has also relocated its LNG plant. Just six days after the announcement of the heritage listing, on 9 July 2007, the Environmental Protection Authority rejected Woodside's initial application to build the Pluto plant at Dampier.

It may be disappointing to see that, after more than five years, the campaign has still not succeeded in securing *all its goals*, but when it is considered how many relocations or cancellations of huge industrial projects have been prompted since the government announced in 2002 that almost twenty major companies would set up business at Dampier, this alone is an almost unbelievable success. Here is the list of these companies, and the present status of their plans at Dampier:

1. BHP Billiton, the world's largest miner – natural gas from the Scarborough field – alternate location chosen at Onslow.
2. Apache Energy – natural gas from the Reindeer field – alternate location chosen at Forty Mile/Devil Creek.
3. Dampier Nitrogen Pty Ltd (formerly Plenty River Pty Ltd) – ammonia and urea – abandoned.
4. Japan DME – dimethyl ether project – abandoned.
5. Methanex Australia Pty Ltd, world's largest methanol producer – methanol plant – withdrawn.
6. Australian Methanol Company Pty Ltd (a subsidiary of GTL Resources PLC) – methanol plant – withdrawn.
7. GTL Resources PLC – methanol plant – withdrawn.
8. Syntroleum Sweetwater Operations Ltd – synthetic hydrocarbons – withdrawn.
9. Plenty River Ammonia – ammonia and urea



*Figure 1.* In this map of the Dampier Archipelago, the land areas that were heritage listed in July 2007 are shown white. The remaining disputes concern the land to be occupied by the Pluto plant, and several allotments west of Hearsan Cove, still earmarked for destruction. Also of greatest concern is a proposal to establish a tourist park occupying the remaining land of northern Murujuga.

- withdrawn.
- 10. Sasol Chevron – synthetic hydrocarbons – withdrawn.
- 11. Shell – synthetic hydrocarbons GTL technology – withdrawn.
- 12. Woodside Aromatics project – ‘deferred’.
- 13. Chloralkali – dimethyl ether project – ‘deferred’.
- 14. Agrium Inc. – ammonia and urea – still under consideration (?)
- 15. Deepak Fertilisers and Petrochemicals Corporation – ammonia and urea – still under consideration (?)
- 16. LiquiGaz Pty Ltd (formerly GTL Resources and Australian Methanol Company) – methanol – unsure.
- 17. Burrup Fertilisers (Oswal Industries) – proceeded.
- 18. Second plant of Oswal Industries – ammonia – alternate location chosen.
- 19. Woodside Pluto project – LNG plant – planned to proceed.

This list of industrial giants gives an inkling of the incredible odds the Dampier Campaign faced in 2002, and of the efforts that have gone into convincing

them to locate their establishments elsewhere. Only one of the planned new installations has been built, and now we are battling to prevent another one from destroying more rock art and stone arrangements. Numerous techniques and strategies have been used in this Campaign, which obviously cannot be discussed in any detail at this stage (but they will eventually all be recorded for the benefit of future rock art campaigners elsewhere).

The second practical effect of the recent heritage listing of Dampier is that it puts the polluting industries on notice. The greatest threat to the rock art is not from development as such, but from the rising industrial pollution levels, already the highest in Australia. The petrochemical companies are perfectly aware that their acidic airshed emissions are a serious threat to the rock patina, and one of them has already indicated that its staunch three-year opposition to the listing was simply due to the fears of legal action arising from such chemical damage to rock art. Needless to say, their fears are amply justified; we will indeed ensure that these polluters are made accountable for their needless destruction of Australia’s greatest



**Figure 2.** Petroglyph site marked for destruction, Holden Point Site A, 7 February 2007. (The photographer of Figs 2 to 4 must remain anonymous for his/her own protection.)

cultural monument. All of these industries could easily be located elsewhere in a region that has one of the world's lowest population densities.

In recent years I have made the following official submissions to members of parliament and government agencies within Australia (and many confidential ones to various companies here and abroad), on behalf of either AURA, IFRAO or both, and these have been a major factor in the progress made:

1. 6 July 1994: Chairman of the Burrup Peninsula Management Advisory Board, 2 p.
2. 12 July 1994: Robert Tickner, M.P., Federal Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, also Senator John Faulkner, Minister for the Environment, and Michael Lee M.P., Minister for the Arts, 2 p.
3. 11 January 2002: Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, letter to the Principal, 1 p.
4. 14 February 2002: Noel Ashcroft, Major Projects, Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, cc. Premier of Western Australia, State Minister for the Environment and Heritage, State Minister for Indigenous Affairs, State Minister for State Development and Tourism, State Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, 2 p.
5. 12 April 2002: Alan Carpenter MLA, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 4 p.
6. 12 April 2002, Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 2 p.
7. 27 May 2002: Alan Carpenter MLA, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 3 p.
8. 4 June 2002: Dr Judy Edwards MLA, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 2 p.
9. 8 July 2002: Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier



**Figure 4.** Destruction of rock art sites in full progress, Site A, Dampier, 7 February 2007.



**Figure 3.** The mobile cranes move into position at Site A.

- of Western Australia, 2 p.
10. 29 August 2002: Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 2 p.
11. 23 August 2002: Dr David Kemp, MP, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 2 p.
12. 26 August 2002: National Native Title Tribunal Chairman, 1 p.
13. 29 August 2002: Colin J. Barnett MLA, 2 p.
14. 4 November 2002: Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 2 p.
15. 12 November 2002: Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 3 p.
16. 14 November 2002: Sue Meaghan, National Native Title Tribunal, 1 p.
17. November 2003: *The rock art of Dampier and the public interest*. Submission to the National Native Title Tribunal of Australia, 83 p.
18. 24 January 2003: Dr David Kemp, MP, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 2 p.
19. 21 March 2003: Colin Barnett MLA, 1 p.
20. 10 April 2003: Colin Barnett MLA, 2 p.
21. 9 May 2003: Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 2 p.
22. 6 June 2003: Colin Barnett MLA, 2 p.
23. 23 August 2003: Dr David Kemp, MP, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 1 p.
24. 23 August 2003: Submission to the Burrup Peninsula Conservation Reserve Planning Advisory Committee,



- Department of Conservation and Land Management, 3 p.
25. 19 January 2004: Dr David Kemp, MP, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 2 p.
  26. 22 March 2004: Department of Environment and Heritage, submission of the Dampier Rock Art Precinct to the National Heritage List, 12 p.
  27. 25 March 2004: Dr David Kemp, MP, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 1 p.
  28. 14 November 2004: Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 4 p.
  29. 27 May 2005: Dr Geoff Gallop MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 1 p.
  30. 20 June 2005: Ian Baxter, Director, Heritage Council of W.A., 1 p.
  31. 4 December 2005: Environmental Protection Authority of Western Australia, 2 p.
  32. 15 December 2005: Appeals Convener Damion McAlinden, Minister for the Environment, 5 p. (EPA Environmental Scoping Document for Pluto LNG Development, DRIMS No. 2069629)
  33. 23 December 2005: Compliance and Enforcement Section, Department of the Environment and Heritage, 3 p. (application for court injunction).
  34. 5 March 2006: Senator Ian Campbell, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 1 p.
  35. 23 March 2006: Dr Ken Michael, AC, Governor of Western Australia, 1 p.
  36. 23 March 2006: Major General Michael Jeffery ACCVOMC, Governor-General of Australia, 1 p.
  37. 23 March 2006: Alan Carpenter MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 1 p.
  38. 28 March 2006: Hon Colin Barnett MLA, 1 p.
  39. 28 March 2006: Michelle H. Roberts MLA, Minister for Heritage, 1 p.
  40. 28 March 2006: Sheila M. McHale MLA, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 1 p.
  41. 28 March 2006: Mark McGowan MLA, Minister for the Environment, 1 p.
  42. 28 March 2006: Jon R. Ford MLC, Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, 1 p.
  43. 4 April 2006: Senator Dr Bob Brown, Leader of the Australian Greens, 2 p.
  44. 20 April 2006: Appeals Convener Damion McAlinden, Minister for the Environment, 6 p. (EPA Environmental Scoping Document for Pluto LNG Development, Site B Option, DRIMS No. 2491609)
  45. 27 April 2006: Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 2 p.
  46. 8 May 2006: Senator Dr Bob Brown, Leader of the Australian Greens, 2 p.
  47. 10 May 2006: Environmental Protection Authority, 11 p. (Woodside's PER for Site A, Burrup Peninsula, Pluto LNG Development).
  48. 12 May 2006: Alan Carpenter MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 2 p.
  49. 1 June 2006: Senator Dr Bob Brown, 2 p.
  50. 14 June 2006: Jonathan Mills, Australian Heritage Council, 2 p.
  51. 1 July 2006: Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 2 p.
  52. 22 August 2006: Alan Carpenter MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 2 p.
  53. 22 August 2006: Objections to the Draft Management Plan 2006-2016 for the Proposed Burrup Peninsula Conservation Reserve, Department of Conservation and Land Management, 4 p.
  54. 9 October 2006: Gerry Gauntlett, Chairman, Heritage Council of Western Australia, 1 p.
  55. 9 October 2006: Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 1 p.
  56. 9 October 2006: Mark McGowan MLA, Minister for the Environment, 1 p.
  57. November 2006: *The rock art of Dampier and the public interest*. Submission to the Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, public interest in the inclusion of the Dampier Rock Art Precinct on the National Heritage List, 104 p.
  58. 15 December 2006: Dr Robert Bruce, Director, Heritage Information Service, Department of the Environment and Heritage, 2 p.
  59. 29 January 2007: United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Violations of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 5 p.
  60. 29 January 2007: Malcolm Turnbull MP, Federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage, 2 p.
  61. 26 March 2007: Lt. General John Sanderson, AC, Special Advisor to the W.A. Premier on Indigenous Affairs, 2 p.
  62. 20 April 2007: Malcolm Turnbull MP, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, 2 p.
  63. 4 June 2007: The Hon. Alan Carpenter MLA, Premier of Western Australia, 2 p.

In addition to these 'official' submissions, I have offered over 200 representations to other bodies and individuals, including national and international NGOs (e.g. World Monuments Fund, International Sacred Sites Trust), Unesco agencies, indigenous groups, heritage protection bodies, resource companies and other major corporate proponents, embassies, governments abroad, trade unions, environmentalist groups, public advocacy groups, academic bodies, indigenous protection agencies and various other relevant entities. Together with a series of publications (50 to 60) about this battle to save the reportedly largest cultural heritage asset of Australia, these endeavours have earned me the disapproval of a good number of people, particularly in the echelons of the state government and the resources companies (including one death threat), and among the consulting archaeologists engaged in the destructive work. But there are tens of thousands of people who have expressed their support, in one way or another, *many* tens of thousands in fact; they outnumber my detractors about five hundred to one. I find that encouraging.

The Dampier Campaign has also had a number of other, incidental effects. To give just one example, I arranged for various questions to be asked in the parliaments (at both state and federal level), such as a series on 9 May 2007 in the Legislative Council of Western Australia. On that occasion, with the help of parliamentarians Dr Bob Brown MP (federal) and Hon Paul Llewellyn (state), I exposed the fact that the government has never mapped the distribution of acid rain; that it has no intention of considering the introduction of a nitrogen oxide levy; and, most

importantly, that it does not have the faintest idea which industries emit greenhouse gases and how much of them. In this time and age, when the practice of carbon trading is introduced or considered around the world, this is a very serious indictment of any government. If it does not know who emits carbon oxides, or the quantities emitted by any installation, how does it expect to deal with the key issues concerning global warming?

In short, the Dampier issues are exposing the incompetence of this government on several fronts, which among other things has recently had to sack nearly half its ministers for corruption, as well as senior public servants. Even the federal minister who has for years delayed the heritage listing of Dampier has in early 2007 fallen victim to the Crime and Corruption Commission of Western Australia.

RAR 24-848

## The Rock Art Preservation Fund

My activist's work at Dampier is funded by the Rock Art Preservation Fund Inc. (RAPF), which I established and registered in Melbourne, Victoria, on 1 July 2004, ABN 38 272 935 597. The RAPF became an incorporated entity on 9 August 2004, in accordance with the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* of Victoria. On 8 July, the RAPF was admitted to the Australian Register of Charitable Institutions, and has therefore since been subject to exemption from income tax, GST concessions and FBT rebate.

The sole purposes of the Rock Art Protection Fund Inc. are the protection, preservation and promotion of public appreciation of rock art, anywhere in the world where it happens to be under threat. The RAPF solicits public and private sponsorship of activities consistent with these purposes, with the full collaboration of the relevant Indigenous communities where they still exist, and under the auspices of the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO). To date, the RAPF has completely focused on just one project, the Dampier Campaign — primarily because it is thought to be the major test case in this field.

The RAPF has received a very limited number of donations, and on 2 March 2007 I have found it necessary to make a personal donation of \$45 000 to the Fund. Not being a wealthy man, I can ill-afford this 'generosity' (after all, I have produced *Rock Art Research* at a substantial commercial loss since 1984), but perhaps it inspires others to follow my example. Even the most frugally run campaign cannot manage without any funding. Anybody wishing to contribute financially to this endeavour of furthering rock art protection and preservation around the world through activism — and currently most specifically the campaign to save the Dampier rock art from destruction — is most cordially invited to help. The bank account details of the Rock Art Preservation Fund are:

Westpac Elsternwick  
422 Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick  
VIC 3185, Australia  
BSB No. 033-047  
Account No. 40-0459

Account name: ROCK ART PRESERVATION FUND

Please advise us when you make a direct bank transfer donation, so we can send you a receipt for taxation purposes. Donations can also be made by cheque or credit card, to AURA.

**Robert G. Bednarik**

RAR 24-849

## AURA Honour List

Individuals who have continuously been members of AURA for more than twenty years deserve to be distinguished for their loyalty and dedication. We have therefore established a special Honour List of them, which reveals a most encouraging trend in the demography of the AURA membership. The Australian Rock Art Research Association Inc. has a significant proportion of long-term loyal members. The following founding members of AURA, who joined us between November 1986 and October 1987, have remained members continuously for over twenty years. I ask you to join me in honouring them; the long-term members are the major source of core strength of AURA, which has been an inspiration to all of us who have worked to make this organisation what it is. As the founder of AURA, I thank each and every one of the following members personally, and from the bottom of my heart. They, and those previously listed (*RAR* 21: 204; 22: 222–3; 23: 282), have made my work worthwhile.

Dr Carol Patterson, Montrose, CO, U.S.A.  
Direction du Patrimoine, Champs-sur-Marne, France  
Robert A. Neal, Brisbane, QLD, Australia  
Dr Bruno David, Monash University, VIC, Australia  
Dr Peter Sutton, Aldgate, SA, Australia  
Dixson Library, University of New England, NSW, Australia  
The General Secretary, SIARB, La Paz, Bolivia  
Völkerkundliche Bibliothek, Frobenius-Institut, Frankfurt, Germany  
Professor Masaru Ogawa, Naruto University of Education, Japan  
Caryll Sefton, Woonona, NSW, Australia  
Dr Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, Helsinki, Finland  
L. L. Gillespie, Campbell, ACT, Australia  
Dr Noelene Cole, St Lucia, QLD, Australia  
Dr Lya R. Dams, Brussels, Belgium  
Mario Consens, Montevideo, Uruguay  
British Library, Wetherby, United Kingdom  
Reynaldo Gonzalez Garcia, Barcelona, Spain  
Fisher Library, University of Sydney, NSW, Australia