

Date: 21 August, 2002
To: Tracy Reeves
At: Woodside Energy Ltd
Pages: 7

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20TH AUGUST, 2002.**

*DISCUSSION ABOUT THE HERITAGE SITES WHICH
COULD BE THREATENED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE BURRUP PENINSULA.*

*INTERVIEW WITH DR PATRICIA VINNICOMBE, FORMER
ARCHAEOLOGIST AND ANTHROPOLOGIST.*

ERINA JOHNSON - PRESENTER:

Up here in the north-west we've heard a lot about Maitland Estate south of Dampier being the shining alternative to Burrup development. However, it's not that simple according to retired archaeologist and anthropologist, Dr Patricia Vinnicombe. Hi, Dr Vinnicombe; thanks for your time.

PATRICIA VINNICOMBE – FORMER ARCHAEOLOGIST:

Hello. It's nice to be included on your program.

JOHNSON:

Well, firstly, Dr Vinnicombe, how long have you been interested in the Burrup Peninsula and the surrounding areas?

VINNICOMBE:

Well, I was first involved in the Burrup Peninsula with the survey for the area when Woodside were planning their development. So I actually walked a lot of the Burrup Peninsula in 1980, prior to any development being there.

JOHNSON:

So you were actually able to see it when it was in a pristine state?

VINNICOMBE:

Yes, indeed. I feel privileged to have had that opportunity.

JOHNSON:

Now, many groups in the community, including conservationists, have been lobbying with the Maitland Estate as an alternative to Burrup development, but you're not convinced about this. Can you tell us why?

VINNICOMBE:

I think that the plans for the Maitland Estate need to be looked at very carefully because it's one thing to say, right, where the actual physical location of the industrial construction is going to be on the mainland, which is on Old Karratha Station (ph.sp.), it's a flat area and it's well out of

the way. That's one thing, but it's all the ancillary and auxiliary and corridors that are linking that estate with the deepwater port that's proposed that is going to cause the problem. And this needs to be looked at very carefully. It includes an access corridor through West Intercourse Island to the eastern side of West Intercourse Island right through to mid West Intercourse Island. And then there's another access through the south-west Burrup Peninsula to link up with King Bay. And this actually impinges on a very large number of heritage sites in an area that's now in pristine condition. I think it's just that the people are perhaps not aware of the extent of the plans for the Maitland.

JOHNSON:

Now, some of the things that you're talking about that will be disturbed are more rock art that we do know about already on the Burrup and there are supposedly carvings of Tasmanian tigers and other prehistoric animals; is that correct?

VINNICOMBE:

There are carvings of animals which look singularly like Thylacines. Whether that's what they are or not is of course debatable in some people's minds, but they certainly look very like Thylacines. But where ... you know, it's very easy to get emotive and say, oh, we can't have these things

destroyed. I don't think that it's necessary ... necessarily the actual physical impingement on these sites that is the threat. I think that if the Maitland Estate went ahead well then a lot of sites would be physically threatened because you can't build an access corridor along that western side of North West Intercourse Island without actually impinging on numerous Aboriginal sites; they are (indistinct) located.

But that's not the ... that's only (laughs), you know, one of the problems. The thing that really has to be looked at is opening up areas where you've got ... where you're actually encouraging or facilitating easy access to sites, not necessarily just the, you know, impinging on the sites themselves by building a building there, but by facilitating access. And I think when you've got, you know, thousands of people coming into an area in addition to those who are already there, and people who are ... there's a very large percentage of the population own four-wheel-drives; a very large percentage of the population are boat-owners and this means that they can go where they like when they like. And this means impinging on sites indirectly, not necessarily directly.

JOHNSON:

When you're talking about access, I guess one major issue that comes up with the development of Maitland is the fact

that the resources that are going to be developed there are finite, but tourism isn't and obviously the world heritage significance of the rock art on West Intercourse Island near the Maitland Estate. If we are talking about the possibility of tourism being developed there as opposed the resources industry wouldn't that also see more people having access to these areas that you say is the issue?

VINNICOMBE:

Well, this is exactly where a plan of management is an extremely important issue and this, I feel, is the crux of the ... this is the crux of what is going on on the Burrup. If there is going to be industry, and there is, then there needs to be a parallel plan for the management of the heritage. For the management, not only just the heritage but of all the other issues that are involved as well. It's ... one needs to develop a wider-angled look at the entire area, at the whole of that Dampier Archipelago. It's not just the actual position where the siting of the industrial complex is. It's looking at the area as a whole and what effect both the industry and the increased number of people is going to have on this area.

Now, I ... this is what really concerns me and I haven't seen any evidence yet – although I believe it is being spoken about – I haven't seen any evidence of a comprehensive plan of management being instigated parallel with the plans for

industry that is going to safeguard, protect and manage the rest of the Burrup. And as I say, it's not just the Aboriginal heritage, there are a lot of other issues involved here as well.

And the (indistinct) area, not just ... not just ... you know, West Intercourse Island or just the south west Burrup or just Hearson Bay [sic] and ... you know, sorry, Hearson Cove and King Bay. Not just those areas but looking at the whole picture. This is the potential for tourism. This is the ...

[Break in transmission]

... ecotourism in operation. It astounds me that this just hasn't happened in Western Australia. And it's because the accent has been on industry without parallel ... looking at it in a parallel way with all of the complete picture.

JOHNSON:

Dr Patricia Vinnicombe there who's a retired archeologist and anthropologist talking about Maitland estate.

END OF SEGMENT