

Anti-Burrup bid grows

By Daniel Clery

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THE International Council on Monuments and Sites has joined the chorus of opposition to development plans for the Burrup Peninsula.

The Paris-based council has urged Premier Geoff Gallop to ensure that the area's unique Aboriginal rock art is protected from industrial emissions from the \$6 billion resources development proposed for the area.

The Government is trying to lure six gas-processing plants to the Hearson Cove industrial area. Two projects - Burrup Fertilisers and Syntroleum - have environmental approval.

In a letter to Dr Gallop last week, the council's Australian president, William Logan, said the area was of undoubted World Heritage status and the proposed developments should be as far away as possible.

Professor Logan put the number of individual motifs at close to a million. They included Australia's only known engravings of thylacines that were believed to have become extinct on the mainland 3000 years ago.

The council is the principal adviser to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation on the conservation and protection of historic monuments and sites. Its letter was sent just two days before the Burrup Peninsula was placed on the National Trust endangered list.

Another vocal critic of the plans, the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations, claims the rock art could disappear as early as 2030 if development went ahead.

Labor supports locating all six gas-processing plants on the Hearson Cove industrial estate. The Greens (WA) and One Nation say all development should be at Maitland industrial estate, south of Karratha.

The Nationals have no policy position on the location of the projects and the Liberals believe the Hearson Cove estate can handle only two or three big-scale developments.

Opposition Leader Colin Barnett said yesterday there was legitimate cause for concern over the possible effects of emissions on the area's value. Hearson Cove was an important recreation site for local residents.

Greens (WA) MLC Robin Chapple said the Government had to take notice of growing international pressure, which could ultimately damage the reputation of companies established on the Burrup Peninsula.

State Development Minister Clive Brown said no projects would go ahead without passing a rigorous environmental approvals process.

Any decision which reneged on existing agreements to locate the developments on the Burrup would threaten international investment in WA for years to come.

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