

## THE BURRUP (MURUJUGA) CAN STILL BE SAVED!

Since publication of the March edition of *The Greener Times* it has been announced that a major Burrup development has been shelved. While the demise of the \$2 billion Methanex plant, referred to on page 3 of last month's *Greener Times*, is good news for all who care about the future of the Burrup, it is possible that the proposal will be revamped or down-scaled. The Methanex news follows the failure of the Syntroleum synthetic oils plant.

It seems that corporations like Methanex seek approval for their projects before doing detailed site-specific engineering plans. Once the engineering plans are drawn up the true cost of development becomes apparent. The strategy of the corporations is to then ask for bigger government hand-outs.

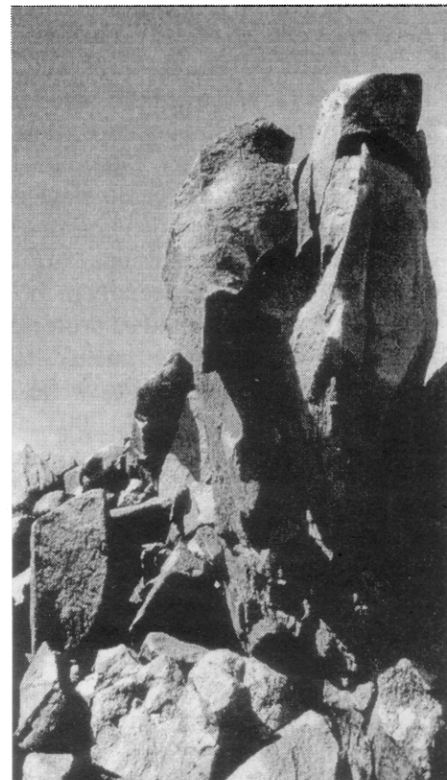
Bruce Aitken, Methanex's Senior Vice President for Asia Pacific, commented, "This proposed development has become increasingly difficult to progress in its originally intended form. For Methanex, the capital costs for a greenfield project of this size have become disproportionately high."

Lobbying for more corporate welfare from the WA Government is well under way. Presently the WA Government has promised \$130 million and the Commonwealth \$80 million.

Already Methanex has cost the WA taxpayer a fortune in environmental impact assessment. The costs include the time input of EPA members, DEP directors, managers and officers, desktop publishing of EPA documents, printing costs and materials.

Parallel to the Methanex proposal the UK based owners of the smaller GTL methanol plant claim to have all necessary financing for their \$700 million project. They claim that site works will start in May. It remains to be seen if GTL's planning and budgeting has adequately considered the engineering complexities of building petrochemical plants on the Burrup.

If you would like to become involved with the Friends of the Burrup, please contact Chris Tallentire on 9420 7238 or E-mail [friendsofburrup@yahoo.com.au](mailto:friendsofburrup@yahoo.com.au) ■



*Boulder formations, the result of ancient in situ weathering, inspire thoughts of super-humans arranging rocks*

## FARMERS REJECT GM CROPS: SURVEY

Fewer than one in five farmers support the use of genetically modified crops, a survey has found.

The Kondinin Group, a WA-based farm group, found that 45% of respondents to its national survey on the use of GM crops were opposed to their release. But even worse for GM supporters, just 19% of respondents said they wanted genetically altered crops while 36% were undecided.

The survey follows comments by Federal Agriculture Minister Warren Truss in which he castigated support by some States for a moratorium on GM crops. Mr Truss said a ban on GM crops would stop Australian agriculture from keeping up with its international competitors.

But the Kondinin Group's survey seems to show farmers have yet to be convinced of the technology.

Of those opposed to GM crops, almost half said they feared they would jeopardise Australia's non-GM crop markets and the nation's image as a producer of clean, green produce. Another 18% said more research and independent trials were needed.

Of GM supporters, 35% said they would increase production and reduce costs, with 14% saying they would be harmless and an inevitable part of agricultural development.

There were large differences between States, with 52% of NSW farmers opposed to GM crops outright. But in Queensland and Tasmania, 43% supported GM crops while only 25% said they were opposed.

Kondinin chief executive William Ryan said the survey showed more education was needed about GM crops which, apart from cotton and carnations, are not yet grown in Australia.

"The main reason to support the introduction of GM crops was the benefit of higher production at lower costs, while those who did not support the introduction are most concerned by the potential lack of support from the consumer," he said in a statement.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator is expected to make a decision on the release of GM canola in mid-April. ■