

Burrup art lobby taps Amex funds

Wednesday, January 14, 2004

• By Clan Manton and Monica Videnieks

AN INTERNATIONAL heritage lobby group will ask American Express, its major sponsor, to give money to a fighting fund to protect the Burrup Peninsula's ancient rock art.

New York-based World Monuments Fund president Bonnie Burnham, whose organisation last year placed the petroglyphs on its list of the world's 100 most endangered heritage sites, completed a tour of the rock art yesterday.

Ms Burnham called on the State Government to reconsider planned industrial expansion on the Burrup and move it away from the heritage site.

She said the WMF's strategies to preserve the rock art could include an international campaign to raise awareness of the site and money for research. Both American Express and other corporations would be asked for financial support.

But State Development Minister Clive Brown said Ms Burnham was in no position to criticise WA's environmental protection record.

"I am not prepared to have a New York-based special interest group come to WA and tell me to make decisions that would put tens of thousands of West Australians out of work," Mr Brown said.

In a meeting with Mr Brown and his advisers yesterday, Ms Burnham said she was also opposed to development on West Intercourse Island.