

## **The Australian 14/01/04**

### **Minister slams lobby trying to stop Burrup projects**

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State Development Minister Clive Brown yesterday attacked an American group lobbying the West Australian government to abandon the expansion of the Burrup Peninsula industrial estate.

Late last year the New York-based World Monuments Fund listed 10,000-year-old Burrup Aboriginal rock art on its 2004 list of the 100 most endangered sites in the world.

It was the first time an Australian site had been added to the list.

WMF president Bonnie Burnham this week visited the ancient site and said yesterday the WMF, with the sponsorship of the American Express, would fight to save the paintings from damage caused by emissions.

“There is so little of this kind of material that has survived and I think the particular significance of Dampier is... the concentration is so great that it puts it in the first rank of rock art sites in the world,” she said. Ms Burnham said the WMF was not anti-development, but Maitland, south of Karratha, would be a more suitable site for development in the northwest.

But Mr Brown said the WMF was trying to create indecision within government and drive investment off-shore.

“In an area like the Pilbara you can’t be seen to be anti-development or anti-investment, so what you use is a device to forever and a day keep moving the sites around,” he said.

“I would have thought the US has enough environmental problems that they ought to be focusing on, rather than telling people what to do.

“Have a look at some of the environmental disasters in the US; I mean they hardly need to be coming over here with a holier-than-thou attitude.”

Melbourne-based rock art expert Robert Bednarik also visited the Burrup Peninsula this week and said the paintings would one day be destroyed by emissions if nothing was done to protect the site.

Premier Geoff Gallop said the Government would not cease projects on the Burrup.

“We are not going to close down the North West Shelf project, we are not going to stop the all-important Burrup fertiliser project that is currently under construction there,” he said. “Expectations have been developed in the business community about the possibility of investing there and we are continuing with that.”

He said a four-year study had been commissioned to research the effects of emissions on the paintings.

The study was first announced in July 2002 and the Government has since formed a Rock Art Monitoring Management Committee, but it was still months away from monitoring the paintings.