

Stoush over Burrup

By Nicole Heinrich

A CAMPAIGNER for the protection of Dampier Archipelago's rare collection of rock art believes a National Heritage Listing is 'vital' for the Burrup Peninsula.

Australian Rock Art Research Association president Ken Mulvaney rejected claims by Member for North West Coastal Fred Riebeling that a possible listing would halt development on the Burrup.

Mr Riebeling has called on Roebourne Shire Council and Karratha and Districts Chamber of Commerce and Industry to oppose the heritage listing nomination.

He said a Federal Government decision to list the site on the register would create uncertainty and result in projects such as Woodside's Pluto and a sixth processing train at North West Shelf Venture's Karratha gas plant not being built in WA.

"National Heritage Listing will stop Australia's most vibrant development site in its tracks and consign Karratha to being a dying backwater," Mr Riebeling said.

He estimated WA would lose between \$19 billion and \$26 billion,

and many long-term jobs if the listing went ahead.

But Mr Mulvaney, an archaeologist, said he could not see the decision spelling the 'death knell' for the Karratha region that Mr Riebeling suggested.

"There is enough industry on the Burrup and a listing will have no effect on the industry already there," he said.

"Karratha is bursting at the seams in terms of accommodation and infrastructure."

Mr Mulvaney said the tourism generated by a heritage listing would offset any revenue lost by projects unable to build on the Burrup.

"No more projects have signed on to build there anyway and those that are here are here and they aren't going to leave.

"The Burrup is a very expensive place to build because of the hardness of the rock and the irregular nature of its topography.

"The reality of Woodside building its Pluto project on the Burrup is very expensive compared to the other alternative of Onslow.

"I think there has been a State

Government push for development on the Burrup rather than an industry push."

Mr Mulvaney said he thought the government should look at developing projects elsewhere in WA.

"I think they should spread industry around the Pilbara," he said.

"The Dampier Archipelago is a place of national heritage significance. A listing for the Burrup is vital.

Mr Riebeling said everyone in the Pilbara supported protecting the region's rock art.

"This is being achieved within the state's existing rules and environmental framework for development and will enable tourism, rock art and industry to co-exist on the Burrup Peninsula for the foreseeable future," he said.

* Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell has placed a September deadline on the assessment for Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago's heritage listing.

He delayed a decision on the listing last year because more consultation and evaluation was needed.