



Aboriginal art movement: Woodside Petroleum has applied to have 20,000-year-old rock art moved from the Pilbara to make way for its \$5b Pluto natural gas project.

Move rock art: Woodside

REGINA TITELIUS

Woodside Petroleum wants to move 20,000-year-old Aboriginal rock art in the Pilbara to make way for its \$5 billion Pluto liquefied natural gas project.

Woodside has applied to the State Government to lift heritage protection over an area in the Burrup Peninsula and says its natural gas project will be in doubt if it is not given approval.

The art is where it wants to build a storage and wharf facility on the coast and a gas treatment plant inland.

A Woodside spokeswoman said options to build the facilities elsewhere would cost more and take longer, compromising overseas contracts. About 150 rock art panels could be affected, although only a small number would be moved and the impact would be minimal.

The final decision rests with Indige-

nous Affairs Minister Sheila McHale. Other environmental approval applications for the storage and wharf facility are with the Environmental Protection Authority and the Commonwealth.

National Trust WA chief executive Thomas Perrigo said the project would destroy a heritage site more significant than cave art in France or Stonehenge. The WA and Federal governments should delay approval until agreement was reached on how to preserve the art. If it was not delayed, then he hoped that national heritage listing would be approved by September.

State Resources Minister John Bowler said national heritage listing would risk future economic projects.

A spokesman for Burrup traditional owners, elder Wilfred Hicks, said Woodside's application should be delayed to find agreement.