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Portfolio: Indigenous Affairs

Ancient rock art decision handed down

15/9/06

Indigenous Affairs Minister Sheila McHale announced today that Woodside would be allowed to proceed with its plans for a major gas installation in the Burrup Peninsula, providing it could re-route a transportation pipe and access road away from the significant rock art and ceremonial sites in the area.

Ms McHale has endorsed a recommendation by the State's key advisory body on indigenous heritage to protect a significant rock art collection in the Pilbara region.

The Minister said the decision allowed this important industrial decision to proceed, while ensuring the protection of some of the area's most significant indigenous heritage sites.

"Aboriginal people feel very strongly that parts of the proposed development area are of such cultural significance that they should not be disturbed," she said.

"Conditions applied to the development mean that approximately two thirds of a square kilometre in the southern area south of Site A cannot be used by Woodside, protecting 225 individual engraved motifs.

"The conditions will require Woodside to find an alternative location for its gas pipe and access road.

"In other areas, Woodside will need to provide suitable facilities for the short and long-term storage of salvaged materials and work with Aboriginal people to develop a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

"This is in line with strict conditions recommended by the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee (ACMC)."

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