

Friends of Pilbara Rock Art

MEDIA RELEASE

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BURRUP DESECRATION ABOUT TO START

After cynically calling for the Burrup Peninsula to be heritage listed earlier in the week (while still reserving the right to trash 165 rock engravings in its Pluto Site A lease!) Woodside is now hoping to slip under the radar of public scrutiny by commencing relocation and destruction of the area's world heritage rock art early next week.

Several heritage-friendly resource companies have already walked away from the Pluto area, but not Woodside. It is well known that the Woodside project could go ahead in at least two already disturbed areas (the Burrup's existing joint venture site or at the Maitland Industrial Estate); five of Woodside's own joint venture partners have already signed letters encouraging such collaboration.

Despite opposition to the Pluto project by all local Aboriginal groups, WA Minister for Heritage Sheila McHale is continuing her well-established pattern of overruling the advice of her own Aboriginal Cultural Materials Committee. It is surely time WA taxpayers were spared any further the expense in maintaining this body; given that the Minister never listens to their advice, it surely serves no further useful purpose.

In contrast to his Federal colleagues Carmen Lawrence, Peter Garrett and Anthony Albanese, Alan Carpenter on Tuesday came out in open support of the Howard Government's amendments to Federal Heritage legislation, which are about to be rammed through Federal Parliament. These will further facilitate the current fire sale of WA's cultural assets, presided over by the people who really run WA; the Department of Industry and Resources.

Like the Tasmanian Hydroelectric Commission at the height of the 1983 Franklin Dam dispute, DOIR is a government bureaucracy completely out of control, whose fanatical dedication to development at any cost risks causing immeasurable damage to WA's unique cultural heritage, as well as its reputation in the eyes of the world. It is time the WA Premier took back control of his own bureaucracy.

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