

28 November 2006

An open letter to The Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, MHR

Dear Prime Minister,

Over twenty years ago I visited Dampier archipelago and saw one of the world's great rock art treasures. This spectacular cultural landscape which extends over 115 square kilometres is the site of the largest and some of the oldest collection of ancient rock art in the world. Much has already been lost and more is now being destroyed by offshore gas storage facilities.

For Australia, who were one of the first signatories to the *UNESCO Declaration Concerning Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage* which was actually developed as the result of the Taliban's destruction of the Bamyán Buddhas, it is scandalous that they are now ignoring their own commitments and are acting as cultural vandals on an international scale.

It would clearly be a tragedy if the Australian government and leading corporate stakeholders allowed this world monument to be destroyed or even damaged.

CC: The Premier of Western Australia, the Honourable Alan Carpenter, MLA,

Sincerely,

Alistair McAlpine, London, England

(Over the last forty years, Alistair McAlpine, Lord McAlpine of West Green has spent much time in Australia and is deeply interested in Aboriginal culture and art.)