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Riebeling rock art comments under attack. 08/12/2006. ABC News Online

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Riebeling rock art comments under attack

An international rock art group has questioned the credentials of a Western Australian politician who has described engravings on the Burrup Peninsula, in the state's north-west, as "ordinary at best".

The Member for North-West Coastal, Fred Riebeling, says the art being earmarked for relocation to make way for the Pluto gas project is not as significant as pieces elsewhere in the area.

But the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations says there is nothing ordinary about the rock art in question.

Convener Robert Bednarik has backed a move by a coalition of federal MPs for emergency heritage listing of the site.

"It has been said before, would we remove one of the columns of a major monument such as Stonehenge? Of course we wouldn't, a monument has to remain intact," he said.

The National Trust in Western Australia agrees the site needs to be kept intact.

President Jenny Gregory says any industrial development would be premature.

"There's been no survey done of those areas, so we don't know for example whether the rock art in those areas is the only rock art of its type or perhaps even the last particular type of rock art in the whole of the Burrup Peninsula - we really need a proper archaeological survey," she said.