

Campbell axes Burrup heritage list

By Nigel Wilson
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CLEARING will begin within days on a stretch of land on Western Australia's Burrup Peninsula containing more than 100 pieces of ancient Aboriginal rock art.

Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell announced yesterday that he had rejected an application by MPs including Labor's Carmen Lawrence, Greens senator Rachel Siewert and independent Peter Andren, to place the Burrup on an emergency National Heritage list.

The application would have delayed Woodside Petroleum from clearing an area known as Site A for its planned Pluto liquefied natural gas development, estimated to cost up to \$10 billion.

Senator Campbell gave approval yesterday to Woodside for initial preparation works at Site A, including engineering works and fencing.

Aboriginal rock art, or petroglyphs, on the Burrup Peninsula was identified as a cultural issue in the 1970s before approval was given for the huge North West Shelf gas project, Australia's biggest single resources development.

Construction of the project involved moving significant numbers of petroglyphs and placing them in a secure compound.

The Australian Heritage Council believes this approach is no longer acceptable, and wants the Howard Government to declare the peninsula and the nearby Dampier Archipelago a national heritage area.

The Burrup area is estimated to contain up to one million petroglyphs ranging in age from 6000 to 20,000 years. Some environmentalists describe it as Australia's Stonehenge, and are demanding that all development be stopped.