

# Aboriginal rock art removed

Nigel Wilson | *February 04, 2008*

**THE controversial relocation of Aboriginal rock carvings from the Pluto onshore facilities site on the Burrup Peninsula has been completed.**

The shift was required after the West Australian Government decided the onshore part of the \$12 billion Pluto LNG development should be situated alongside the existing North West Shelf production facilities, has been condemned by conservation groups both within Australia and internationally.

The Burrup Peninsula and the 42 islands of the Dampier Archipelago contain has one of the largest concentrations of rock art or petroglyphs in the world: an estimated 1 million carvings up to 30,000 years old.

Experts say the collection should not be disturbed because of its cultural and heritage context.

The Pluto site was last year excised from an Australian Heritage listing of the peninsula and the archipelago under federal Government legislation designed to protect the engravings.

Woodside said the relocation was completed on January 16, with 170 boulders containing engravings moved to other areas within the Pluto leases.

A spokesman said none of the engravings had been damaged in the move. All had been moved in the presence of Aboriginal monitors.

"We were able to leave undisturbed about 95 per cent of the estimated 3000 engraved boulders on the Pluto leases," he added.

"Those boulders relocated represent less than 0.02 per cent of the estimated 1 million petroglyphs on the Burrup Peninsula and surrounding Dampier Archipelago."

The relocation has been a fraught exercise for Woodside, with some of the petroglyphs being incised on rocks weighing many tonnes, requiring sophisticated extraction techniques.

The Burrup site may ultimately contain up to four LNG processing plants drawing on gas supplies from the North West Shelf and possibly as far away as the Browse Basin.