

# Burrup Think Tank Delivers New Directions

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A mid-year summit over three days in Western Australia's far north has delivered long term directions and a set of 2009 objectives for one of the nations most controversial and culturally rich heritage locations as Gina Pickering reports.

On the first anniversary of the Burrup Conservation Agreement, oil and gas company Woodside held a Karratha (WA) based workshop to help further refine the future of the unique heritage site.

Fifty people participated in the event, including the five Aboriginal Groups who live at the Burrup, Federal State and Government agencies including the National Trust (WA), key Woodside executives and some international contributors with expertise in cultural heritage matters.

The over arching desire of the Aboriginal people expressed at the workshop was that the rock art remain physically safe from disturbance and degradation and that ongoing legal protection was provided for the site through a Conservation Agreement.

The workshop produced both short term and long term initiatives including a series of seven milestones due for completion by June 2009.

Woodside Energy's Cultural Heritage Manager, Ben Garwood said the workshop provided clear direction for the next year and actions for years ahead.

"One of the first things is to go back to the Murujuga Corporation over land that's national heritage listed and talk through the workshop outcomes," he said.

Woodside has also committed to investing in the Conservation Agreement objectives through the company's Rock Art Foundation Committee (RAFC). The committee is currently working with local Aboriginal groups to create five new positions for local Aboriginal people to monitor heritage and environmental issues.

In line with the four conservation agreement objectives, Woodside launched on 30 August 2008 a national advertising campaign calling for projects in the area.

Woodside maintains that strong emphasis will be placed on projects that involve the Aboriginal groups of the local area.

Eligible projects could, be related to archaeology, anthropology, tourism, history, heritage management and interpretation.

National Trust CEO Tom Perrigo has confirmed the National Trust (WA) would provide a submission focused on education and learning.

He said Woodside Energy was seriously committed to the project and that there were opportunities for both indigenous and non-indigenous people to move forward together.

"There are also huge challenges because at the moment both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are not working together themselves let alone with each other, Mr Perrigo said.

Mr Perrigo believes the evolution of the conservation agreement had also influenced the National Trust's role in the Burrup.

"It's changed from an advocate, an independent voice trying to influence decision makers to stop destruction to an active participation in education and learning including training and offering guidance," Mr Perrigo said.

"We're still watching the brief, not as a watch-dog but both looking and listening as a representative of a community voice," he said.

The six long term outcomes measured by a 2017 deadline include the physical and legal safety of rock art, the development of a Cultural Gateway to the Pilbara, unity amongst Aboriginal groups, effective and sustainable monitoring and conservation, managed access to significant sites and ownership by Aboriginal people.

**The Burrup Accord 2008 - 2017**

**June 2009 Milestones**

1. Manage National Park created and celebrated at NAIDOC week (PS)
2. One local Aboriginal entity representing one voice (PS)
3. An effective and endorsed decision making process in place and at the right tables (SCar)
4. Full understanding of agreement of rights, obligations and inter-dependencies (BCurbar)
5. Five local Aboriginal positions in conservation and protection on the Burrup (SC)
6. Clear understanding of all threats to rock art on The Burrup (PP)
7. An integrated and co-ordinated approach to national heritage values including identification, presentation, research and monitoring (LP)

**2017 Targets**

- Aboriginal People Need To Work Together
- Worlds Best Practice Joint Management
- Integrated Aboriginal Heritage Asset Plan
- Aboriginal Needs Leading After The Land
- Active, Structured Consultation & Audit Program
- Understanding Of Agreements
- Alignment Of All Levels Of Govt
- Cultural, Scientific & Awareness Program

**2017 Outcomes**

- Rock Art Is Physically & Legally Safe
- Cultural Gateway To The Pilbara
- Effective & Sustainable Monitoring & Conservation
- Unity Amongst Aboriginal Groups
- Managed Access To Significant Sites
- Ownership By Aboriginal People

ABOVE | Dampier Archipelago contains the largest concentration of rock art in the world. National Trust (WA).

RIGHT | Short term milestones for 2009, and longer term targets from the Burrup Conservation Accord. National Trust (WA).