



Ancient art under threat

New images show how Australia is destroying its own Stonehenge

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The first images showing full impact of Woodside's new LNG plant in the heart of the Burrup Peninsula, Western Australia, have just been released.

See image here <http://www.standupfortheburrup.com/1.jpg>

Friends of Australian Rock Art have released recent aerial photographs which show for the first time the full extent of Woodside's destruction of a globally significant rock art area on the Burrup Peninsula to make way for the company's Pluto LNG plant.

Under the former State Labor Government, Woodside was granted approval to remove 941 rock art engravings, some dating back to before the last ice age, from the company's Pluto A and B leases (WA State Parliamentary Question on Notice No: 4455, available at: <http://www.dampierrockart.net/Questions.html>)

Responding to these disturbing images, archaeologist Professor Sylvia Hallam states that "the Pluto project represents devastation on an unprecedented scale in one of the densest areas of rock art on the entire Peninsula; it should never have happened, and it must never happen again."

Despite the 2007 National Heritage listing of part of the Burrup Peninsula (the world's oldest and largest rock art gallery), and the recent election of avowed Burrup advocate Colin Barnett as WA's Liberal Premier, the area's unique cultural values are currently threatened by further rock art clearance proposed by several companies.

The concrete company BCG has obtained ministerial consent for the removal of a number of prehistoric rock engravings which are impeding the expansion of its quarrying operations on the Burrup.

Woodside CEO Don Voelte has publicly stated the company may need to clear additional rock art from its Burrup leases.

Burrup Fertilisers proposes to build an explosives factory adjacent to its existing fertilizer plant and the current Woodside Gas facility. Earlier this year, workers walked off the site following allegations of poor plant safety standards (remember Varanus?).

Friends of Australian Rock Art calls on WA Premier Colin Barnett to avoid the heritage disasters of his Labor predecessors by honouring his commitment to preserve the Burrup for posterity by immediately:

Nominating the Burrup Peninsula for World Heritage listing;

Calling a halt to further rock art clearance on the Burrup by Woodside, BCG, Burrup Fertilisers, Methanex and other companies;

Establishing a credible management plan to protect the Burrup's global cultural and scientific values for humanity.

The Burrup provides a unique record in stone of perhaps as much as 30,000 years of continuous human occupation, and may also contain the earliest known representations of the human face, as well as several animal species which have been extinct for several thousand years.

It is the only Australian site listed on the World Monument Fund's list of 100 most endangered world monuments, which includes Burma's Angkor Wat and Peru's Machu Picchu sites.