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30/09/2006. ABC News Online

Last Update: Saturday, September 30, 2006. 9:13am (AEST)

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Greens Senator Bob Brown has accused the Federal Government of double standards after its response to plans for a mining operation near the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea.

An exploration licence has been granted for the Kokoda area and Prime Minister John Howard says he wants to stop it from going ahead.

Senator Brown says the Federal Government has made no commitment to protect an area of Western Australia's Burrup Peninsula where Woodside Petroleum wants to build a natural gas plant.

He says the peninsula is home to some of the oldest and most important rock carvings on earth.

"It's appalling ethics," he said.

"The Kokoda Track should be protected, no doubt about that, but the Burrup rock art site ought to be protected as well.

"Neither of these places should be destroyed by miners or mineral extraction processing, and the Federal Government needs to be consistent about this."