

Woodside kick starts Pluto

WORK on Woodside's \$10 billion Pluto gas project began on the Burrup Peninsula last week, ending a fight by heritage groups and politicians to shift the facility to an alternative site to save 150 pieces of ancient Aboriginal rock art from being moved. Liberal MP and former State Opposition leader Colin Barnett — who has been campaigning to relocate the project to a cleared, adjacent site leased by the North-West Shelf Venture Partners — said work on the plant's first phase made a mockery of the Federal Government's consideration of heritage listing for the area.

"If Woodside are proceeding on that site then any national heritage listing is either irrelevant or too late," Mr Barnett said.

"It does not matter what the Government comes out with — the decisions would have been made and the rock art moved or destroyed."

Mr Barnett criticised the State Government, saying it was staggering that Labor MPs had been silent on the most significant heritage issue WA had faced. National Trust chief executive Tom Perrigo vowed to fight on, saying Woodside was yet to be granted final environmental approval for the second part of the project.

"How they can give approval for the destruction of one of the world's greatest scientific treasures is beyond me," he said.

A Woodside spokeswoman said the relocation of rock art, in consultation with the traditional landowners, archaeologists, and relevant government agencies would leave 95 per cent of the rock art undisturbed.

She said the cleared land would eventually be home to LNG storage tanks.