



Art assault: Escalating vandalism has led to calls for Burrup Peninsula to get the same protection as Stonehenge.

Vandalism raises fears for rock art

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Moves for Burrup Peninsula's internationally acclaimed rock art to be protected under World Heritage regulations have intensified with the release of pictures showing the site's latest vandalism.

Friends of Australian Rock Art released new pictures this week showing stick figures and initials scrawled on the historic rock carvings and stone formations at Kangaroo Paw Valley in the Dampier Rock Art Precinct, which is listed as a national heritage area.

Robin Chapple, the co-convener of FARA's Australian chapter, called on Federal Heritage Minister Peter Gar-

rett to intervene as he attacked the State Government and industry leaders for not preventing continued vandalism by recreational users in the area.

"As industrialisation of the Burrup has grown, increased vandalism has mirrored the expansion," he said. "FARA can see no other way to protect the Burrup than by Mr Garrett ensuring only controlled access to the heritage site."

Mr Chapple said the area should be given the same level of protection as England's Stonehenge, Egypt's pyramids and the Northern Territory's Kakadu National Park. "We call on all those people who have witnessed their friends or associates committing this

wanton vandalism to come forward to provide evidence to the police or Federal authorities to enable prosecution," he said.

A spokesman for Mr Garrett said he was working with the State Government to create a "bilateral agreement" to ensure the rock art was adequately protected while facilitating ongoing development in the area.

He said any act of vandalism that had a significant impact on a national heritage value would be punishable under Commonwealth law, with fines up to \$5.5 million or up to seven years imprisonment.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Michelle Roberts could not be contacted for comment yesterday.