Gas blast 'shows Burrup development dangers'

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Environmentalists, fighting to prevent further development on the Burrup Peninsula, say this week's gas explosion on Varanus Island highlights the dangers of industrial development on the peninsula.

A gas pipe at Apache Energy's operations on Varanus off the Pilbara coast ruptured and caught fire on Tuesday leading to the evacuation of more than 160 staff to nearby Barrow Island.

Friends of Australian Rock Art says a similar explosion on the Burrup would result in the loss of thousands of prehistoric carvings and stones from the slopes and galleries.

The group's convener, Robin Chapple, says it is time the state realised what is at risk.

"This incident is really that wake-up call that the State Government needs to have to realise it's inappropriate to put these sorts of plants in what is in essence a museum."