

Burrup heritage decision delayed

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FEDERAL Environment Minister Ian Campbell says it could be "many, many months" before he decides whether to add a vast array of Aboriginal rock art in Western Australia's north to the heritage list.

Senator Campbell said last week that the Burrup Peninsula rock art, under threat from LNG developments in the area, met requirements for National Heritage listing, but that he would seek public comment before deciding on their fate.

The site, said to include hundreds of thousands of petroglyphs, dates back to the last Ice Age.

Developers of the north-west gas field off WA want to build an onshore facility on the peninsula.

Senator Campbell today said it could be "many, many months" before he made a final decision on heritage listing.

"I think it could be well into next year," he said.

"It's an incredibly important decision to get right.

"I believe very strongly that the economic benefits of development at the Burrup are in synergy with the environmental benefits of exporting natural gas to the northern hemisphere.

"Every tonne of gas from the clean green WA gas fields of the north-west, every tonne of that replacing a tonne of coal or oil, reduces your greenhouse gas emissions by 40 to 60 per cent.

"We have got to ensure that we do nothing to hamper the development of that resource because of the massive economic and environmental benefit, and at the same time we have got to get a management plan for the heritage."