



Decision on Burrup rock art 'months away'

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A FINAL decision on the boundaries of an Aboriginal Heritage area covering thousands of example of ancient rock art in the Pilbara is months away according to Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell.

Woodside Petroleum, which is planning a \$5 billion onshore LNG terminal on the Burrup Peninsula to exploit its Pluto gas discoveries, last week expressed concern at Senator Campbell's announcement that he was seeking further comment on the Aboriginal Heritage Council's recommendation.

Rock art on the Burrup has become controversial in recent years, with some activists saying shifting examples of works to accommodate industrial activity is akin to moving Stonehenge in England.

The proposed boundaries of a national heritage area cover most of the Burrup and offshore islands, which contain the \$20 billion NW Shelf gas project, BHP Billiton's multi-billion dollar iron ore shipping facilities and an agricultural chemical plant.

Senator Campbell said today he believed very strongly that the economic benefits of development at the Burrup were in symmetry with the environmental benefits of exporting natural gas.

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

Woodside said it was concerned a National Heritage listing could result in costs and delays for industry that would have significant economic implications for WA, but not deliver any significantly improved heritage protection.

"The Burrup is one of the most productive areas in Australia per hectare and hosts mining and energy investments of about \$35 billion and is responsible for up to 7000 direct jobs, and many thousands probably hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs," a company spokesman said.