

Why this sacred symbol must not be desecrated

October 2, 2006

The Age - Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Double standards

IT'S fascinating that Prime Minister John Howard is determined to block the development of a gold mine near the Kokoda Trail in PNG because it is "of enormous historical and military significance to Australia" (*The Age*, 30/9) — while, closer to home, the Government of Western Australia and Woodside Energy are planning to turn the largest outdoor rock engraving site in the world into an industrial estate in WA's Pilbara region.

The Burrup Peninsula contains perhaps as many as half a million Aboriginal rock engravings, some dating back almost 30,000 years, and is the only Australian site on the New York-based World Monument Fund's list of the world's 100 most endangered monuments.

Before the Burrup is converted into a liquefied natural gas (LNG) and fertiliser plant, it is to be hoped that the federal Minister for Heritage, Ian Campbell, will demonstrate the same level of commitment to the unique heritage values of the Burrup as the Prime Minister does for Australian military sites such as Gallipoli and the Kokoda Trail.

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