



## **AM - Fed Govt rejects Dampier Archipelago for heritage list**

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**Reporter: Alexandra Kirk**

PETER CAVE: The Federal Government has rejected a request to place the rock art-rich Dampier Archipelago in the north-west of Western Australia on the national heritage list.

The Environment Minister Ian Campbell is sticking to his plan to reach agreement with all the stakeholders, including Woodside Energy which plans to build an onshore gas plant there, before declaring what will be protected.

Three federal MPs tried to force Senator Campbell's hand by lodging an application to urgently heritage list the area and protect thousands of Indigenous rock carvings.

But Senator Campbell told Alexandra Kirk he won't be rushed.

IAN CAMPBELL: Well, this is basically an application from Kevin Rudd's Labor and the Greens to put a spanner in the works of the biggest natural gas project in Australian history.

It seeks to effectively close down that project or slow it down on the pretext of rock art in less than 0.2 per cent of the Burrup Peninsula.

We must remember there's 20,000 hectares, about one million pieces of art and this Labor and Green application seeks to close down the biggest natural gas project in Australian history because of one piece of potential heritage, one piece of rock art out of a million.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: So if you didn't ever intend to do this, why didn't you just say so after the three MPs lodged their emergency protection requests instead of waiting till the day when most Australians start heading off for Christmas holidays?

IAN CAMPBELL: The law requires you go through an assessment process looking at all of the archaeology, looking at all of the national heritage values, doing an analysis.

What we have found is that there is one piece of rock art which we now know the Indigenous communities are very happy to see moved in a sensitive way so that the

project can go ahead.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: But don't you think any bit of the Burrup Peninsula warrants protection now?

IAN CAMPBELL: Oh, what I regard as important is to put in place a management regime for the whole of the Dampier Archipelago, the whole of the Burrup Peninsula to ensure that the rock art is protected for generations to come, but also a protection regime that allows the natural gas industry - an industry that provides clean fuel to the rest of the world, that has a transformational benefit for greenhouse gases, it's a 50 to 70 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions where you replace coal and oil being burnt in the northern hemisphere with clean, green, West Australian gas - we want that industry to expand, we want the rock art to be protected in a sensible way, we don't want this short-term political game playing by Federal Labor and their comrades in the Greens.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: If you think only one bit of rock art is in danger and that the Indigenous custodians are happy to be moved, why not make the decision now?

IAN CAMPBELL: Well, I'm making a decision on the whole of the Burrup and the whole of the Dampier Archipelago...

ALEXANDRA KIRK: Well, you seem to have made up your mind already?

IAN CAMPBELL: ... that builds a long-term protection regime, that ensures that the majority of the rock art can be protected, but also that Australia's economic interests can be protected. We need a win, win, win situation for Australia.

ALEXANDRA KIRK: So when will people know what will be protected in the Burrup?

IAN CAMPBELL: Look, I'm working with the developers, working with the economic proponents, working with the WA State Government and local communities, including Indigenous communities and I'm very keen to get this long-term plan in place and to do so by around about the middle of the year. But I don't want to be constrained by artificial timelines.

PETER CAVE: The Environment Minister Senator Ian Campbell.