



JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

Senator Rachel Siewert Senator for Western Australia
Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence MHR Federal Member for Fremantle
Mr Peter Andren MHR Federal Member for Calare

Attn: News Editors/Chiefs of Staff – Tuesday, 3 July 2007

Too little, too late for the Burrup

The decision by the Minister for the Environment to give National Heritage listing to the rock art of the Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago is overdue, insufficient, and lacks courage.

Greens Senator Rachel Siewert, Labor's Dr Carmen Lawrence and Independent Peter Andren welcome the listing, but say:

“The Minister’s belated decision to recognise the undisputed heritage values of the Dampier Archipelago and the Burrup Peninsula comes too late to stop the damage that has occurred, and is sadly framed to allow further damage. It would have taken uncommon courage for the Minister to protect the full scope of the Burrup art against the wishes of Woodside Energy. Unfortunately, he hasn’t shown that courage.”

“The Burrup petroglyphs form an organic cultural record that cannot be chopped up into bits and pieces, especially when the government has never bothered to fund a comprehensive scientific and historical survey of the artworks. What we do know is that the Burrup is ‘a place of unparalleled artistic, cultural, religious and historical significance’ as far as Australia is concerned, and that it is one of the most incredible continuous records of ancient human culture on the planet.”

“At this point we call on Woodside Energy and the Western Australian government to go one better than the federal Minister, and to protect Australia’s heritage by relocating the proposed Pluto gas plant to one of the perfectly adequate alternative sites that have been identified.”

The National Heritage listing has been framed to leave out two important sites (Pluto A and B) within the area so that Woodside’s Pluto gas project can proceed. Site A has already been subject to the removal of petroglyphs, and the development of Site B will cause further damage.

The three parliamentarians previously sought an emergency listing of the Burrup (December 2006) when it became clear that Woodside’s removal of rock art was imminent. Today’s decision has been delayed and ultimately formulated in a way that fails to protect the organic value of the Burrup petroglyphs against a development that could easily have been situated elsewhere.

For Comment

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