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Ripper welcomes Burrup heritage listing

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Commonwealth heritage listing of the Burrup Peninsula will not stifle industry and will help protect thousands of rare Aboriginal rock carvings, State Development Minister Eric Ripper said today.



Mr Ripper was speaking following Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull's announcement of the national heritage listing of 241sq km of the Burrup, or 99 per cent of the land where most known carvings and paintings are situated.

"The Burrup is an important industrial hub as well as being an important heritage site," Mr Ripper said.

"(It) currently produces about \$15 billion in production which is exported, so that's something to take in to account. Further development is possible because there are industrial sites that are not in the heritage listed area and even in the heritage listed area, properly planned and sensibly controlled development is possible."

He said the next step to protect the site – world heritage listing – had been considered but was not currently on the agenda.

"I have inquired about world heritage listing and I've been advised that it would be unlikely to be at the head of the national queue for world heritage listing," Mr Ripper said.

"It's got Commonwealth protection, it's got State protection, and that's very important."

Of 166 natural world heritage sites in the world, Australia has 16 which include Kakadu, Uluru and Fraser Island. The Sydney Opera House was also added to the world heritage list for culture this year.

"World heritage listing is a very competitive game and there are other places in the country that are ahead of the Burrup Peninsula," Mr Ripper said.

Greens leader Bob Brown attacked the decision to only protect 99 per cent of the Burrup rock art, saying it was akin to selling off a section of the Sydney Opera House.

He said giving up even one per cent of such a significant site was "laughable".

"This is probably the world's greatest rock art site," Senator Brown told reporters in Sydney. "It predates the primitive art sites in France, it's much older than Stonehenge or the pyramids of Egypt, and here's the minister saying 'I'll keep one per cent of it aside for the gas developers'."

PETA RULE and AAP