

Heritage campaigns underway in earnest

By DALE MILLER

A NON-PROFIT organisation will be set up by wildlife park operator Malcolm Douglas in an effort to secure world heritage listing for the Kimberley's most precious natural attractions.

The organisation would be run out of an office in Broome by a full-time and part-time worker under Mr Douglas' plan with the purpose of first securing a national heritage classification for the West Kimberley.

Sites such as the Horizontal Waterfalls, Montgomery Reef, Buccaneer Archipelago and the Prince Regent River have been listed among the priorities for protection by Mr Douglas.

Sites must first be accepted on the National Heritage List before world status can be granted. There are no locations from the West Kimberley listed on the national register to date.

Mr Douglas said the final heritage boundary still needed to be negotiated with government, traditional owners and other interested parties

but would help protect the country to a degree from massive development.

"I just think it would be great for Broome and Derby," he said. "I want Broome and Derby to be the gateway to one of the world's great heritage sites."

The Sydney Opera House became the most recent entry from Australia to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage List on June 28 this year, joining other inclusions such as the Great Barrier Reef, Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China.

More than 830 sites of natural or cultural importance are protected under the 1972 UNESCO convention.

Mr Douglas has been a central figure in a campaign opposed to Japanese company Inpex's plans to build an LNG plant on the Maret Islands off the far north Kimberley coast.

He said the remoteness of the West Kimberley's natural attractions made it harder to gather sup-

port for heritage listing.

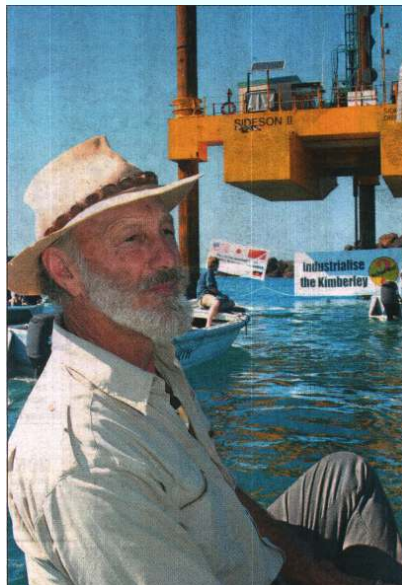
"It would be so much easier to generate interest and excitement if (these sites) were situated next to Broome," he said.

WA Environment Minister David Templeman said protecting the Kimberley's unique values was a priority for the Northern Development Taskforce.

"The State Government is committed to ensuring the Kimberley's unique values are recognised and protected and any moves by the Federal Government to place appropriate areas in the West Kimberley on the National Heritage List would be supported," he said.

Mr Douglas first announced he would pursue the listing at the Parks and Protected Areas conference held in Fremantle in September this year.

He anticipated it would take up to three years to get the West Kimberley listed on the national register but said it could be 10 to 20 years before the region could gain world heritage status.



PROTEST: Malcolm Douglas at the Maret Islands in June.