

Jack Thompson backs Kimberley campaign

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Narelle Towie

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AUSTRALIAN film veteran Jack Thompson is part of a passionate plea to WA Premier Colin Barnett to stop industrialisation of the Kimberley.

Mr Thompson has lent his voice to the Kimberley conservation campaign which urges West Australians to send messages to Mr Barnett urging him to stop development in the Kimberley.

Before flying to the US to promote his new film *Australia*, Thompson said the Kimberley was one of Australia's last great wildernesses and it was under serious threat from industrialisation.

He appealed for the region to remain untouched.

The WA government has spent millions of dollars on producing its own tourism advertising campaign to coincide with the movie's release and to highlight the extraordinary natural values of the Kimberley.

Wilderness Society WA Campaigner Josh Coates said this clearly demonstrates how valuable the Kimberley is to our tourism industry in its pristine state.

"I don't think anyone could deny that people would be less attracted to the region and less prepared to travel across the world to see a landscape dotted with large scale, polluting industry or other activities that would damage this unique place," he said.

"What they will come for is the humpback whales, the magnificent coastlines, unique cultural heritage and vast untouched wilderness.

"We are delighted to have Jack Thompson's help in protecting our amazing Kimberley from current ill-conceived industrialisation plans."

Conservation Council of WA Director Piers Verstegen said the future of the Kimberley was increasingly a national and international issue and films like *Australia* served to highlight WA's global responsibility to protect the area.

Director of Environs Kimberley Maria Mann said: "We don't need to turn the

Kimberley into another Pilbara in order to create wealth and jobs, or secure the future of local communities, including Indigenous communities. We really hope the government will realise that.”

The Kimberley conservation advertising campaign will coincide with screenings of *Australia* over the next month.