
WA's stonehenge threatened by Burrup plan

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Hundreds of standing stones on WA's Burrup Peninsula — up to five times as old as Stonehenge — are being destroyed by development, archaeologists have warned.

The stones, some standing alone, others aligned or clustered in groups, are accompanied by artworks believed to be up to 20,000 years old and leading experts say the area has to be given National Heritage protection to ensure the site can be properly explored.

But the WA National Trust says the State Department of Industry and Resource has bulldozed many of the stones and destroyed more than

3000 ancient artworks while clearing land on the Burrup for roads and development.

National Trust WA chief executive Tom Perrigo said the destruction of the art and stones in the name of industry was a travesty.

"It would not happen in the UK. It would not happen in the States. It would not happen in most of Europe," he said. "The scale of the destruction is mind-boggling."

The push for National Heritage listing was a necessary step to force the State Government into protecting the site, which was a world treasure.

Standing stones are a phenomenon that occurs around the world, most famously at the British sites of Stone-

henge and Avebury. The Burrup is home to Australia's biggest collection of the stones, some up to 2m tall, but little research has been done.

Researchers said the aligned stones were similar to European stone circles as they appeared to be sites where religious or ceremonial rituals were carried out.

Though there was no evidence that they were aligned for astronomical reasons, they held secrets we had not begun to understand.

Retired associate professor of pre-historic archaeology Sylvia Hallam said dating of other artefacts in the area suggested significant human habitation on the Burrup dated back more than 20,000 years.



Stand alone:
Burrup stones a
new Stonehenge?