

Woodside offers rock art scholarship

WOODSIDE will fund a three-year study into rock art on the Burrup to be carried out by an independent university.

Member for North West Coastal Fred Riebeling says if tools are downed and construction on the Burrup is outlawed the WA economy will slide into recession and rock art conservationists will scratch their heads wondering how things got so bad.

But Greens Senator Rachel Siewert has hit out at the scholarship and the motives behind the funding.

"If Woodside really want to

understand the ancient Aboriginal petroglyphs on the Burrup Peninsula, they would be working with the State Government and other industry players to protect the rock art, by developing an alternative location for their gas plant," Senator Rachel Siewert said.

Senator Siewert expressed her concerns after Woodside announced it would fund a three-year post-graduate research project into rock art on the Burrup by the University of New England.

"Further research on Burrup's

unique rock art is urgently needed," she said.

"But I am cynical of Woodside's motives when their proposed development will destroy invaluable petroglyphs at the proposed Pluto site.

"It is ironic that when the three year research project ends they will have a much better understanding of the cultural, historical and archaeological value of what they have destroyed."

Senator Siewert is a staunch supporter of protecting the rock art.

Ben Cranston