

Burrup emergency listing infuriates Campbell

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A move by Labor and the Greens to put the Burrup Peninsula on the emergency heritage list had put Woodside's \$5 billion Pluto natural gas project in doubt, Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell said yesterday.

A furious Senator Campbell accused Labor MHR Carmen Lawrence, Greens Senator Rachel Siewert and Independent MHR Peter Andren of an "outrageous abuse of process" after they applied yesterday for it to go on the emergency list.

They claim Woodside is about to start removing and destroying rock art on the peninsula in preparation for Pluto, and have urged the Minister to step in. They want Woodside to consider moving Pluto to cleared land on the peninsula, to avoid any damage to the rock art.

The move puts Dr Lawrence, a West Australian, at odds with State Premier Alan Carpenter who last

week said development and heritage could co-exist. The State Government and Woodside agreed last week to support national heritage listing, provided a 7sqkm area was excised for a gas precinct.

Senator Campbell has 10 days to respond to the emergency application and said yesterday the move undermined an existing nomination for 874sqkm of the North-West, including 100sqkm of the Burrup, to be put on the National Heritage List.

He said it could take "many, many months" for a final decision on heritage listing but he was working with industry and the State Government to come up with an arrangement to preserve the rock art without jeopardising the development of the natural gas fields in the North-West.

Senator Siewert said the Minister had had plenty of time to decide. "We are now in an emergency situation where the rock art is directly threat-

ened," she said.

Senator Campbell, who has been criticised for putting economic development ahead of his portfolio, conceded yesterday that some rock art would have to be destroyed for the lucrative natural gas industry. "Not all of it can be protected if you want to ensure that those natural gas exports go to China, go to Korea, go to North America, go to Japan," he said. "This puts the whole thing at risk."

He said issue had to be put in perspective — the Pluto project would remove only 165 of the estimated one million pieces of rock art in the area.

Woodside can begin removing the art work as soon as it gets State environmental approvals — expected before the end of the year. A spokesman said the company had not removed any rock art and was confident that the Pluto project would stay on schedule.



Fresh row: A new controversy has flared over moves to protect Burrup rock art.