



## **WA rock art removal given thumbs up by Indigenous group**

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**Reporter: David Weber**

EMMA ALBERICI: Aboriginal groups say they're happy with Woodside Energy's plan to move ancient rock carvings to make way for a liquefied natural gas project in Western Australia.

The Federal and State Governments have given approval to Woodside to remove the artworks on the Burrup Peninsula.

David Weber reports.

DAVID WEBER: Woodside has been preparing its site but hasn't moved any rock art yet.

Elders from local Indigenous groups will be monitoring the process. They're considered the custodians of the rock carvings, which were made by a community devastated by massacres in the 19th century.

Ngarluma elder, Roger Barker, says the petroglyphs will go to an area where they'll be more accessible than they are now.

ROGER BARKER: You know, in the past what's happened is that, you know, the companies haven't had monitors on site and haven't been in consultation with us and they've just gone along and destroyed stuff and moved things and just turned them over and, you know, basically destroyed it.

And, you know, the press releases that have been bandied about is that, you know, up to 3,000 rock carvings and engravings and stuff will be destroyed but this, it's not true. You know, there's only a slight percentage that will be destroyed and we're happy with that to happen.

DAVID WEBER: Does it detract from the importance of the material, I guess, the spirituality of the rock art, if it is removed, moved somewhere else?

ROGER BARKER: It will, but you know, like I say, in the past, at least we've got stuff, we've saved the stuff and we can move it to other areas, it'll be... there's different types of engravings in the area that's being set aside and we can situate these rocks that we're moving and place them in, you know, the appropriate area of where they belong.

DAVID WEBER: Mr Barker says that in the past, governments did not show much concern for the rock art at the Burrup when industry was being developed.

Mr Barker won't go into details on what the custodians will be receiving from Woodside.

ROGER BARKER: Well you know, there's employment, employment and training and other infrastructure stuff, but you know, mostly that's privy information between Woodside and the groups and you know, in the past we've had a rough deal from most companies and Woodside and the Pluto project's actually one of the companies that are actually setting the benchmark for what's happening up here.

DAVID WEBER: There are four distinct groups working with Woodside on the rock art, representing more than 4,000 people. The company has broken them down into two groups,

which tend to work together.

One group that's not involved is the Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo.

Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo Elder, Wilfred Hicks, says there should be no work on the Burrup while one group is refusing to be involved.

WILFRED HICKS: We quite understand that if we are not there, they still go ahead. If you look at the agreements what we have signed, they said it involves the three groups.

One group, if he's not happy about it, they should not go ahead until they've sorted it out properly before they start doing anything because our heritage is getting broken.

EMMA ALBERICI: Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo Elder Wilfred Hicks speaking there to David Weber.