

Burrup heritage listing within months: Turnbull

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PERTH, April 18, 2007: The federal government is aiming to have a vast array of ancient Aboriginal rock art on Western Australia's Burrup Peninsula heritage listed by mid-year, Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull says.

Mr Turnbull yesterday toured the area, said to include hundreds of thousands of petroglyphs dating back to the last Ice Age.

Gas and oil giant Woodside Petroleum sparked outrage among conservationists and Indigenous groups when it moved some of the rock art while beginning work on a \$10 billion liquefied natural gas project in the area earlier this year.

Mr Turnbull today said it was an "awesome experience" to visit the area.

"It's impossible to stand before carvings which are tens of thousands of years old, which go back to before the beginnings of history, right into our prehistory ... and not be awestruck," Mr Turnbull told reporters in Perth.

"It's also, of course, an industrial centre.

"The gas that's processed there is going to power the world, is powering much of the world."

Mr Turnbull said the government was aiming to finalise heritage listing for the sites by the middle of the year.

"It's important to balance the heritage issues, the heritage values, and development," he said.

"And we're confident that that can be done."

Woodside says it had successfully completed the relocation of the rock art without causing any damage.

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