

Fraser joins fight to save ancient Pilbara rock art

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FORMER prime minister Malcolm Fraser has backed a global campaign against the destruction of Aboriginal rock art in the Pilbara.

He said yesterday Australia's reputation as a defender of world heritage would be "severely damaged" if the ancient rock art on Western Australia's Burrup Peninsula was not preserved.

Experts believe the rock art is among the oldest in the world, with some dating back 30,000 years.

But Woodside Petroleum sparked outrage among conservationists and indigenous groups when it moved some of the art while beginning work on a \$10 billion liquefied national gas project in the area this year.

Mr Fraser said the WA Government had been wrong to allow industrial works there.

"That mistake should not be compounded by allowing or encouraging Woodside to build its Pluto LNG plant there," he said in a statement.

"The Australian Government was one of the loudest voices protesting the Taliban's destruction (of) the Buddhas in Afghanistan. If Woodside's LNG plant is allowed to proceed, Australia's reputation as a defender of world heritage would be severely damaged."

Federal Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull said in April that the Government aimed to have some of the rock art heritage-listed by mid-year.

AAP