

The Greens

Susan Jarnason

Candidate for Wentworth

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AUSTRALIA'S TREASURES DESTROYED – TURNBULL DODGES ACTION AND BURRUP IS BULLDOZED

Member for Wentworth and Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull came under fire from the Greens today in his electorate for his refusal to protect the rock art of the Burrup Peninsula from industrial development. The Burrup is the only Australian site listed on the World Monument Fund's list of the world's 100 most endangered cultural monuments, which includes Macchu Pichu in Peru and Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

In the last week of Parliament Mr Turnbull approved the Woodside Pluto gas project in the Burrup Peninsula. This week Woodside is removing and destroying approximately 200 rock art panels on its Pluto B lease to make way for the LNG plant.

Following his approval, a detailed submission was made from local Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo people calling on Mr Turnbull to use his powers under section 9 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act to declare the Burrup a significant aboriginal area and therefore protect it from destruction. Mr Turnbull failed to even consider the application. Instead, he flicked it to the assistant Minister, John Cobb.

Mr Cobb, in a one page letter of refusal, said that he was 'not satisfied that Site B is a significant Aboriginal area within the meaning of the Act'. This is in spite of the fact that the Burrup has:

- up to a million historically significant rock carvings;
- several distinct phases or styles reflecting different climates and cultures;
- work as old as 30,000 years, well before the last ice age; and
- cultural heritage five times older than the Pyramids.

Standing at an Aboriginal rock art site in Bondi, Ms Jarnason said of Turnbull's dodge:

"Mr Turnbull didn't even show the backbone to refuse this application himself. It was within his power to protect the Burrup by recognizing its unique and incredibly ancient aboriginal heritage. Instead his junior Minister has been set up as scapegoat."

"If Mr Turnbull thinks that he can avoid scrutiny of his anti-heritage and anti-environment policies simply by dodging the decision, then he underestimates his local electorate. People I speak to in Wentworth want Mr Turnbull to stand up for the environment, not bulldoze or pulp it, in one decision after another."

"The rock art here is an inspiring link to our Aboriginal heritage admired by thousands on the cliff walk. If anyone was to propose bulldozing this, then Mr Turnbull would be here in a flash with cries of outrage. But over in the Burrup thousands of ancient carvings are in peril and he doesn't say a word. Once again Mr Turnbull's decisions are designed to protect Mr Turnbull, not our environment," Ms Jarnason said.

Visit: www.standupfortheburrup.com

For more information phone Susan Jarnason on 0421 797 063

www.greens.org.au/Wentworth