

Kimberley heritage move under fire

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The State Opposition has accused Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett of running off on his "green agenda" with plans to heritage list 17 million hectares of the Kimberley.

Shadow agriculture minister Gary Snook said that if the heritage listing went ahead, the detrimental economic ramifications for WA's agriculture and resource sectors would be massive.

"Consultation with the State Government and all industry stakeholders . . . must be undertaken before any moves to heritage list are considered," he said.

Mr Snook's comments were echoed by the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, which said such a move would seriously damage the future of mining in Australia.

Public affairs manager Darren Brown said mining and exploration projects in WA were already subject to a burdensome approvals process.

"Adding more red tape by applying national heritage status to such a vast area would be the last straw," he said.

Mr Snook said it was outrageous that Agriculture Minister Kim Chance was not notified by the Federal Government of its intentions in the Kimberley.

Environment Minister David Templeman said the State Government supported the need to protect the unique Kimberley environment.

"But we also support the need to do it in a sensible, strategic, open and transparent way," he said. "At the heart of this process is what areas and boundaries should be looked at. Nobody advocates an ambit claim on the Kimberley."