

Explosives plant rocks art friends

By MARGARET BERTLING

ROCK art on the Burrup Peninsula could be at risk from a proposed explosives plant, according to Friends of Australian Rock Art co-convenor Robin Chapple.

Burrup Nitrates Pty Ltd met with the Shire of Roebourne last week to put forward the proposal for a US\$600,000 million technical ammonium nitrate (TAN) facility adjacent to their Burrup Fertilisers Pty Ltd ammonia plant at Hearson's Cove.

Ammonia from the fertiliser plant will be processed to form TAN, the main raw material for porous ammonium nitrate and fuel oil.

Mr Chapple, who represents the Greens in the Upper House, said the project should not be granted approval at Hearson's Cove.

"That is a legitimate project which needs to go through rigorous assessment, but should not be located in the world's most important heritage

site," he said.

Mr Chapple said the Burrup was home to the largest petroglyph gallery in the world. Major resource companies such as Chevron Wheatstone, Apache and BHP Billiton had decided not to further develop the Burrup area, he said.

"On the basis of the heritage values it seems to me rather bemusing that somebody who is not a major corporation doesn't seem to have the same ethos or conscience of our major corporations around the world," he said.

Mr Chapple said the cumulative effect of emissions and the visual impact were of major concern.

"Any accident associated with that plant or indeed the current plant would have irrevocable damage of the whole system," he said.

"The rock galleries are quite stable at one level but any seismic activity

or any accident associated with that plant would dislodge the boulders over a large area of the Burrup, and we just cannot take that risk."

Pending environmental approvals, the project should start earthworks by October 2009 and be operational by 2012.

It will cover around 7ha of land, require 600 workers at peak production and employ around 65 people when commissioned.

Mr Chapple said he would make comments to the Environmental Protection Authority during the approvals process and would have further discussions with Premier Colin Barnett.

Burrup Nitrates Pty Ltd is a 50-50 joint venture between Australia's Burrup holdings Ltd and Norway's Yara International ASA, one of the world's largest chemical companies.



The Hearson's Cove precinct where Burrup Nitrates are proposing to build a technical ammonium nitrate production facility, a development opposed by Friends of Australian Rock Art co-convenor Robin Chapple.