



Media Alert

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For immediate release

Attention: All news and business journalists and editors, COS

Turnbull artfully dodges Burrup heritage decision

Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull has rejected an application by Aboriginal custodians of WA's Burrup Peninsula (the Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo people) for protection of their world heritage rock art. His decision to outsource this decision to his offsider, Assistant Environment Minister John Cobb (MP for Parkes) shows clearly that he lacks the courage of his convictions. (See John Cobb's letter to barrister Mr Grantham Kitto here: http://standupfortheburrup.com/doco/Cobb_to_Kitto_re_s9.pdf).

Following FARA's half page ad in the Wentworth Courier last month, three of Turnbull's political opponents in the Federal seat of Wentworth have made statements in support of the Wong-Gg-Oo-Tt-Oo's struggle to save their unique cultural heritage: in September, the ALP's George Newhouse called on Malcolm Turnbull to accept the Wong-Ga-Tt-Oo application, while the Green's Susan Jarnason and anti-pulp mill candidate Danielle Ecuyer have today both issued press statements attacking Turnbull's sell out of the Burrup rock art.

After obtaining Mr Turnbull's approval for the Woodside Pluto project on the last day of parliament on Friday 12 October, the company is currently removing/destroying approximately 200 rock art panels on its Pluto B lease to make way for an LNG plant in the heart of the Burrup.

In the week before the Federal Government moved into caretaker mode, Mr Turnbull approved the Gunn's pulp mill, the industrial devastation of WA's environmentally sensitive Barrow Island and Woodside's Pluto LNG development in the heart of the Burrup. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that Mr Turnbull sought to evade responsibility for the rejection of the Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo people's application by outsourcing it to his offsider John Cobb.

Extraordinarily, Mr Cobb was 'not satisfied that Site B is a significant Aboriginal area within the meaning of the Act', despite detailed submissions from the Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo on the area's heritage values, the opinion of leading archaeologists that the Burrup is the world's oldest and largest rock art gallery, and the fact that 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 and Angkor Wat.

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Turnbull and his assistant minister also refused to consider the Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo people's request for the Pluto project to be relocated to other commercially viable locations available nearby which would not impact on their cultural heritage.



They have also ignored significant doubts about the legality of works currently being undertaken on Pluto B; Wilfred Hicks, Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo elder and spokesperson, allege in his application to Malcolm Turnbull that Woodside was in breach of several clauses of the section 18 conditions set by the WA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regulating the removal of Pluto B rock art, and that the State of Western Australia was also in breach of a number of clauses of an agreement negotiated by the State Government with the Burrup's Aboriginal custodians.



Friends of Australian Rock Art calls upon Mr Turnbull, Shadow Minister Peter Garrett and the WA State Government to publicly commit to halting any further industrial expansion on the Burrup Peninsula.



ENDS

For further information:

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- Media coverage of the Burrup issue:
www.dampierrockart.net/Media/
- Stand Up for the Burrup website:
www.standupfortheburrup.com



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