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**Friends of  
Australian  
Rock Art**

**C/o Conservation Council of W.A Inc.  
Lotteries House 2 Delhi St. West Perth  
6005 Western Australia  
fara.perth@gmail.com  
Mobile: 04 0266 4503  
ABN: 35 018 895 052**

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## **Thirteen percent of Burrup rock art destroyed**

An estimated 13 percent of indigenous rock art on the Burrup Peninsula has been destroyed over the last 25 years, says Friends of Australia Rock Art (FARA) convenor Robin Chapple.

“We need to remind the public that already, 10,000 rock art carvings have been destroyed or relocated – not just the ‘less than one percent’ figure relating to Woodside’s current plans to locate a large LNG plant on the Burrup Peninsula, North-Western Australia. Woodside’s current destruction is only one more sorry chapter in the destruction of rock art on the Burrup, principally overseen by successive West Australian governments.”

FARA has welcomed Federal Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull’s announcement on April 17 that he will list the Burrup Peninsula on the National Heritage Register in about six months. But Mr Chapple notes the decision still may allow Woodside to continue with its plans to build its 1.6 square-kilometre Pluto plant on the Burrup.

“Woodside has already moved 43 rock carvings – some of which have been damaged – and plans to move a further 100-200 in its next stage of development. Admittedly, Woodside have done a lot of work on diminishing the footprint of the Pluto plant but it’s like squeezing a size 10 foot into a size 6 shoe! There is no room for Woodside to expand without further damage and relocation of more rock art. That may be only a matter of ‘when’ given the potential size of the gas fields in the north-west shelf and Woodside’s own dreams of contract processing LNG for other multinationals.”

Blasting and industrial pollution at the Woodside site will pose further risks for the rock art. “In some cases, pieces of rock art are less than 10 metres from the nearest roadway. Seismic blasting is already underway and will continue. The impact of vibrations on standing stones and rock flying on other petroglyphs cannot possibly be monitored by the skeleton staff of archaeologists employed to monitor proceedings over such a large area. Air pollution from the plant will over time also damage the art”, he says.

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“There exists a compound known as ‘the graveyard’, where rock art was relocated during the clearing activities of the early 1980s. Up to 1,800 pieces lie, some face down, in this cyclone fence enclosure. Most bear markings of large white numbers identifying that they have been catalogued. Many images have probably been irreparably damaged due to moisture, moulds and algal decay. These rocks were meant to be in this enclosure for one week, yet they have now been there for 20 years. Can we afford for this type of ‘promise’ to be repeated?”

“There has been talk about how Woodside and heritage can co-exist but in reality this is impossible due to the nature of industrial development. The site will bring more traffic and pollution to the Burrup. FARA would like to see Woodside move Pluto to a site off the Burrup. Federal and state governments should show leadership on world heritage issues and consider providing an incentive for such a move.”

“30,000 year old rock art should be highly treasured. It’s not being made any more. It’s our precious cultural heritage and part of this wonderful unique landscape that only Australia possesses.”

FARA is coordinating national and international activities to convince Woodside to shift off its current site on the Burrup. Over 40 ‘Stand Up’ actions have taken place all over the world in protest of what is happening on the Burrup. Belgium, Brazil, France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Spain, South Africa and USA have all been ‘Stand Up’ locations.

At a recent stand up action at Woodside’s AGM, FARA lobbied stakeholders to raise awareness of the environmental, heritage and economic risks associated with locating the Pluto LNG plant on the Burrup. Though alternative sites exist, Woodside admitted at the AGM that they chose the current Burrup site at the insistence of the West Australian government.

“Given Woodside’s recent announcement of an annual revenue of \$AU 3.81billion, it would appear that profits precede cultural heritage preservation policies.

FARA would like to see the Burrup Peninsula granted World Heritage status and the rock art looked after via comprehensive management plans that have been drawn together with the Traditional Owners. Otherwise, the 13 percent rock art destruction figure will only exponentially increase. This is death by a thousand cuts.”

FARA identify that they do not object to industrial development or the Woodside Pluto Project at more appropriate locations.

Contact: Friends of Australian Rock Art: [fara.perth@gmail.com](mailto:fara.perth@gmail.com)

Visit [www.standupfortheburrup.com](http://www.standupfortheburrup.com) for more information on the Burrup art and the campaign.

**Ends**

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### Stand Up for the Burrup Opportunities:

<b>Midland (WA)</b> Farmer's Market (behind Midland Town Hall)	<b>27/05/2007 - 09:30</b>
<b>Spain</b> Seville - La Giralda	<b>27/05/2007 - 18:00</b>
<b>Melbourne (VIC)</b> Federation Square, Outside Ian Potter Center	<b>03/06/2007 - 11:00</b>
<b>Sydney (NSW)</b> Opera House	<b>10/06/2007 - 14:00</b>
<b>Italy</b> Milan cathedral	<b>24/06/2007 - 16:00</b>

### Public Presentation:

Robin Chapple will be presenting the latest information along with photos from his recent visit to the Burrup Peninsula.

- Why is the Burrup Rock Art so important?
- Isn't it being heritage listed?
- What impact is industry having on the Burrup?
- Aren't they moving the rock art to a safe place?

These questions and more will be answered:

When: 6 – 8 pm Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2007  
Where: Conservation Council Meeting Room  
City West Lotteries House  
2 Delhi Street, West Perth

### Further resources:

More than 250 photographs of International and Australian 2007 Burrup actions

<http://www.standupfortheburrup.com>

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