



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

Minister for the Environment and Water Resources

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DAMPIER ARCHIPELAGO JOINS NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST

The renowned rock art of Western Australia's Dampier Archipelago (including the Burrup Peninsula) has been included in the National Heritage List.

The Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, made the announcement with Indigenous and industry representatives in Canberra today.

The 241 square kilometre listed area is 99% of the land area where National Heritage values occur.

Rock art on the remaining 1% will continue to be protected under WA legislation and the companies whose leases cover this rock art are committed to working around the sites of high heritage value. Where that is not possible rock art will be relocated in consultation with the indigenous communities.

"The Archipelago was formed around 8,000 years ago with underlying rocks amongst the oldest on earth, formed in the Archaean period more than 2,400 million years ago.

"In the rocky red valleys we can begin to understand how Aboriginal people responded to changes in the landscape after the last Ice Age.

Rock engravings are thought to number in the hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, with individual sites like Skew Valley in the Southern Burrup containing over 20,000 individual engravings.

Images in the Burrup area range from humans including figures engaged in everyday activities such as hunting, to animals like fish, turtles, kangaroos, emus and snakes and species such as the thylacine or 'Tasmanian Tiger' that have been extinct on the mainland of Australia for thousands of years.

Mr Turnbull said today's announcement was a demonstration of how environment and heritage protection can be balanced with economic and industry development.

"The Dampier Archipelago is home to Australia's second largest tonnage port (Dampier Port), supports thousands of jobs and contains in excess of \$35 billion in industrial developments. Today's decision shows that the Archipelago's significant heritage can co-exist alongside one of our most resource-rich industrial areas.

"This listing is the result of great cooperation with Indigenous communities, the Western Australian Government and companies including the North West Shelf Venture, Rio Tinto, Woodside Energy and other stakeholders including the National Trust of WA."

"The partnership approach which led to this decision will see long-term management of the site through Conservation Agreements and industry will invest in excess of \$40 million to protect this unique heritage place," Mr Turnbull said.

The two and a half year assessment of the Dampier Archipelago and Burrup Peninsula by the Australian Heritage Council was a comprehensive one and included extensive research, stakeholder consultation and opportunity for public comment.

“I’d like to thank everyone who invested considerable time and effort into this significant achievement, particularly the Indigenous groups, the industrial companies, the National Trust of WA, the Australian Heritage Council and the Former Environment Minister, Ian Campbell.

“I’d also like to thank members of the public who have taken a keen interest in the nomination process and particularly the Friends of Australian Rock Art, a group working to raise awareness of the Burrup Peninsula’s unique heritage.”

The Australian Government’s National Heritage List recognises and protects our most valued natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places. For more information visit www.heritage.gov.au

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