



Friends of Australian Rock Art Inc.

MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY 28 AUGUST 2018

FARA RESPONDS TO STATE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT IT WILL PROGRESS BURRUP TENTATIVE WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

FARA co-convenor Judith Hugo has congratulated WA Premier Mark McGowan on Monday's announcement that the WA State Government will recommend nominating the globally significant rock art of Murujuga (the Burrup Peninsula) for UNESCO's Tentative World Heritage List. But she has also warned that the McGowan Government's policy of further industrialisation near sensitive Burrup rock art risks undermining the chances of successful UNESCO listing.

'FARA has campaigned with Aboriginal custodians since 2006 to achieve this outcome, but it will still take six to eight years to finalise the UNESCO listing. In the meantime, Mr McGowan's Government has been going hell for leather trying to fill up every available space on the Burrup with new industrial plants'.

'The State Government seems to have completely ignored Emeritus Professor John Black's compelling scientific evidence presented to the 2017 Senate inquiry¹ and corroborated more recently by other experts,² showing that the rock art at some sites is being destroyed by a massive rise in

¹https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/BurrupPeninsula/Report.

² Letter from international rock art specialist Dr Stéphane Hoerlé to WA Minister for environment: <http://www.fara.com.au/lascaux-cave-art-expert-speaks-out/>

www.fara.com.au

**C/o Conservation Council of W.A Inc. Lotteries House 2 Delhi St. West Perth
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industrial emissions since the 1960s, which has led to a 1000% local increase in acidity of the rock surfaces’.

‘The State Government earlier this year gave the green light for further industrial expansion by the Norwegian company, Yara Pilbara, to operate an ammonium nitrate plant without properly considering the potential effects of emissions on the rock art. The McGowan Government has also been encouraging other companies like Coogee Chemicals and Perdamon Chemicals to move onto the Burrup, and thus further increase acidic emissions.’

‘We’re extremely worried that by the time UNESCO comes to assess the Burrup, they may decide the site is too compromised to qualify for World Heritage Listing. We believe the Premier is extremely naïve to think World Heritage Listing can go hand in hand with further industrial expansion on the Burrup. The rock art, with more than 40,000 years of human spiritual beliefs and culture captured in stone engravings, is unique in the World. It is priceless and irreplaceable and of huge international significance.’

‘FARA continues to call on the McGowan Government to locate new industries on the nearby, purpose-built, Maitland Heavy Industrial Estate. The WA Government was advised back in 2002 that Maitland would provide an economically viable alternative for industry, while protecting the Burrup’s internationally significant cultural heritage values.’³

³ <http://www.fara.com.au/the-maitland-industrial-precinct-development-done-responsibly/>

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'To avoid UNESCO World Heritage Listing failing at the last hurdle, we call on Mr McGowan to locate new industry (which is so important for the economic development of the Karratha region), on Maitland Industrial Estate, rather than on the Burrup Peninsula.'

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