

Visions of the Past

The world's most endangered rock art

The Rock Art Precinct of Dampier Archipelago in Western Australia is the largest cultural monument of Australia, consisting of a gallery of well over a million images engraved on rock by Aborigines thousands of years ago. It is under severe threat from industrial development, which could easily be located elsewhere along the west coast. It has been listed by the World Monuments Fund as one of the most threatened monuments in the world. We are engaged in an effort to raise public awareness of the need to preserve this massive Australian monument, the world's largest rock art concentration. A major component of this effort is a travelling public exhibition, which has been shown with great success in Western Australia. It is now intended to travel the rest of the country, and will also be shown in several venues abroad (in Italy, India, United Kingdom and other countries).

A free public exhibition by the Australian Rock Art Research Association Inc. (AURA) and the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO). The free exhibition, named *Visions of the Past: the world's most endangered rock art*, will be shown in Melbourne from 4 to 12 October 2005, in the Pastoral Centre at St Francis Church. This venue is located at the corner of Elizabeth and Lonsdale Streets, Melbourne City, where the exhibition will be open 9 am to 6 pm on weekdays, 9 am to 3 pm on Sunday. The initial opening ceremony will be at 6 pm on Tuesday, 4 October 2005, but come at 5.00 and have a good look at the display first.



The Dampier Archipelago is on the coast of the Pilbara region, in north-western Australia. The red line in the above map delineates the boundary of the proposed cultural precinct, which features the world's largest concentration of petroglyphs (rock carvings) and Australia's largest collection of stone arrangements.



Dampier image of the extinct Thylacine (Tasmanian wolf)

This incredible treasure of pre-historic art, Australia's greatest and most valuable cultural monument, is gradually being destroyed by petrochemical development which could be established elsewhere much cheaper. Since 1964, between 20% and 25% of the rock art sites on MuruJuga (Burrup) have been destroyed by this badly planned development. In addition, the acid rain caused by the Woodside plant has since the mid-1980s begun to bleach the remaining rock surfaces. Yet the state government is determined to treble the size of the petrochemical installations and their emissions. This will destroy the remaining rock art within this century.

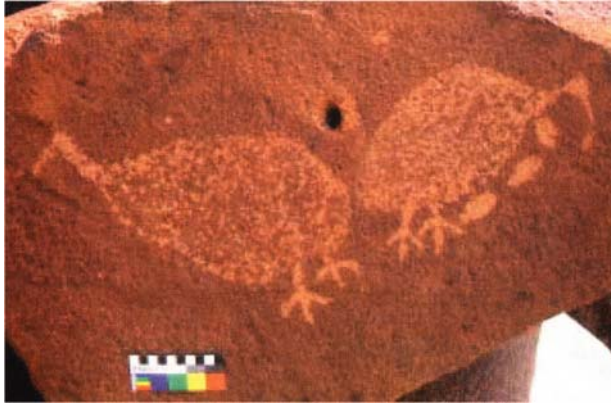
The Dampier Archipelago is a cultural, natural and scenic precinct that must be protected in perpetuity. Nomination for World Heritage listing is required now, and a National Park must be established to protect Australia's finest monument for all future.

The creators of this huge outdoor gallery, the Yaburarra, were decimated by the police in a series of state-sanctioned massacres commencing 17 February 1868, and lasting for three months. Only six members of the tribe are recorded to have survived the MuruJuga massacres.



The state has never compensated the survivors or their relatives. Instead, the present state government is now attempting to erase the last surviving traces of the culture of the Yaburarra.

There is no practical, logistic or technical reason why the planned industries could not be established elsewhere.



This free exhibition explains the reasons for the government's conduct, it shows the dangers of the plan to establish an industrial powder keg at Dampier, and why the explosive industries need to be spaced far apart and in more suitable locations.

It also shows the grandeur of the sacred Dampier cultural precinct, and what we will lose if the government had its way. Several international organisations as well as the National Trust of Australia have declared the Dampier rock art one of the world's most threatened monuments.

Please help save the cultural precinct of the Dampier Archipelago! What you can do:

Visit the Save Dampier Rock Art site at
<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/dampier/web/index.html>
click on [PETITION](#) and sign

Write a letter to the Premier of Western Australia,
197 St George's Terrace,
Perth, W.A. 6000

Write a letter to your local member of Parliament

Murujuga petroglyphs



This panel of petroglyphs is one of thousands to be destroyed by entirely unnecessary state vandalism.