

The Wonders of the Burrup

The Burrup Peninsula, formerly one of the islands of the Dampier Archipelago, is one of the world's most important archaeological sites.

It is located 1,600km north of Perth, Western Australia, in the heart of the Pilbara.

This mysterious place was added to the National Heritage list in July 2007 by the former federal government.

The Dampier archipelago contains what is considered to be the largest remaining group of prehistoric petroglyphs (rock carvings) anywhere in the world.

It is also the only place that contains a chronology of human endeavour from +30,000 years ago to the present time, mapping, through the carvings, the changes of environment, species extinction and cultural swings up to and through the last Ice Age to the current day.

The islands and peninsula that make up the archipelago are characterised by their unique red boulder strewn granophyre hills and enigmatic valleys.

The extremely hard rock has enabled humankind's earliest artistic endeavours to remain trapped in time on the faces of the millions of boulders that cover the islands.

In the 1960 s with no understanding of the heritage values of the area, it was chosen as an industrial port site. Since that time over 10,000 of these ancient artworks have been destroyed in the pursuit of the almighty dollar.

Notwithstanding the National Heritage listing and growing international concern, the WA state government is still encouraging the petrochemical and ammonium nitrate industries to locate on the islands.

The World Monuments Fund (New York) and the National Trust Australia both continue to list the Dampier Archipelago on their most endangered heritage lists.

In July this year Friends of Australian Rock Art will again be guiding an archaeological tour of interested folk over this wonder of the world.

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