

Brynn Mathews

23 January 2017

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications  
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Protection of Aboriginal Rock Art of the Burrup Peninsula

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on what I believe to be not only a completely inappropriate and hazardous industrial development on the Burrup Peninsula, but also a highly culturally insensitive proposal for an area of ancient, irreplaceable art that is worthy of World Heritage listing.

I have had a working history of 20 years with environmental protection agencies in Tasmania, Victoria and Queensland and am very familiar with the impacts of acidic air pollution on buildings, especially historic stone ones. I was fortunate enough to visit the Burrup Peninsula in 2000 and to say I was in awe of its natural beauty and the astounding collection of ancient petroglyphs scattered across it would be an understatement.

However, the LNG plant built on the peninsula is in brutal contrast to this natural beauty and, from the cultural point of view, equivalent to stabling horses in a cathedral. The lack of respect, even indifference, to the cultural value of these petroglyphs, not only to Australia's First Nations but also globally, should be seen as a national disgrace. To compound this cultural contempt with the proposed Yara Pilbara ammonium nitrate plant staggers belief.

My tertiary qualifications are in chemical engineering and my work has meant a lot of engagement with the mining industry, where ammonium nitrate and diesel is often the explosive of choice for miners, as it has been for many suicide car bombers more recently. To put an ammonium nitrate plant next to one processing hydrocarbons has got to be unwise if not foolhardy. The failure to do a risk analysis of this adjacent placement of industries, as referred to in the committee terms of reference, is negligent to the extreme. I have nothing to add to the submission from Dr Kuylenstierna on the impacts of acid deposition and totally endorse his statements.

In conclusion, I found this proposal to be wrong on so many levels that I found it hard to believe that anyone seriously proposed it. Please recommend that this proposed development be prevented and also recommend that steps be taken to acquire World Heritage listing for the Burrup Peninsula as a globally significant cultural site.

Yours sincerely

Brynn Mathews,

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