

MEDIA RELEASE

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Our national heritage needs protection, not just recognition

National Heritage listing provides formal recognition of the outstanding cultural and natural values of the West Kimberley, however listing alone will not protect the values this two year process has identified.

“This decision must be a call to action for the Australian government – it is not enough to merely recognise values. If the government is serious about our natural and cultural heritage, the Environment Minister must act to *protect* these values,” Environs Kimberley Acting Director Emma Belfield said today.

“Though today’s announcement will formally recognise the national significance of the Kimberley, it will not stop large scale industrial development,” Ms Belfield continued.

The Minister himself said last week in his Press Club speech:

The west Kimberley is one of the last areas of true wildness in Australia and one of the important things to remember with a heritage listing is a heritage listing is not a lock out. A heritage listing is not something that says no development....:

[See here for full transcript](#)

“It’s marvellous to see the Minister recognise the suite of cultural values in today’s decision, however on environmental grounds, this is a fairly poor outcome. The Minister has identified relatively few natural values in the listing, and largely included natural places that are already protected (e.g. Mitchell River National Park; Geikie Gorge) or those which aren’t at risk. This is a missed opportunity to recognise natural values alongside the cultural values, and the links between them,” Ms Belfield said.

“Environs Kimberley worked hard to argue the case for a full suite of natural values to be included in this decision. We’re particularly disappointed that the Kimberley coast with its coral reefs that rival Ningaloo or the Great Barrier Reef, and the nursery grounds of the world’s largest humpback whale population were not included today. ”

“Given the threat of industrialisation, it’s important that we protect, not just recognise the outstanding values of the Kimberley,” Ms Belfield concluded.

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