

Govt highlights WA LNG potential

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The Federal Government says Australia could become the biggest exporter of liquified natural gas (LNG) in the next decade, with the industry tipped to expand five-fold.

The Browse Basin, off Broome in northern Western Australia, is shaping up as one of the biggest reserves.

Federal Resources Minister Ian Macfarlane says intense competition for a piece of the Browse Basin highlights the gas field's potential.

Shell has just been awarded exploration rights, adjacent to the giant Ichthys-Brewster gas field, owned by Japanese company Inpex.

Inpex says it may develop an LNG processing plant on an island north of Broome, while Woodside is also looking at options for a facility in the West Kimberley.

Mr Macfarlane expects an acceleration of development proposals.

"We could see a whole new LNG plant facility established in the region to take advantage of a very strong demand, particularly in the Asia Pacific rim," he said.

Mr Macfarlane is confident the Kimberley tourist industry can co-exist with the expanding resource development.