

Gas plant snub

By DALE MILLER

ENVIRONS Kimberley has rejected an invitation to join a community reference group providing input into Woodside's proposed Browse LNG processing plant, labelling the body a "toothless tiger".

The reference group will be involved in site appraisal and concept assessment for the processing plant, which Woodside wants to build off the Dampier Peninsula.

But EK has opted to directly engage Woodside on the issue, describing the plant as a "community-changing" project that could potentially alter the nature and culture of the Kimberley region.

EK chairwoman Jacqui Remond said the body had no faith in the proposed reference group model.

"The terms of reference for the CRG are incredibly broad and lim-

ited to providing comment," she said.

Ms Remond said there were no guarantees the reference group's views would influence the final decision made by Woodside and the company's joint partners.

"The requirement to attend two to three two-day meetings of the CRG within two months from January to March, 2007, is onerous, the timeframe - given the paucity of environmental information for the region - is impossibly short, and we have strong objections to all three sites on the current shortlist - Bigge Island, Wilson Point and Scott Reef," she said.

Woodside Browse LNG Development government and public affairs manager Annalisa Grubisa said the company was disappointed that EK had chosen not to join the reference group. "We

looked forward to having EK's contribution to the reference group and hope they change their mind," she said.

"Despite the decision of Environs Kimberley, we believe the community reference group will provide an important conduit for the community to have input into Woodside's deliberations on the Browse LNG development."

Ms Remond called on WA Premier Alan Carpenter to organise a committee of all parties to identify a site for a single industrial park for all Browse projects.

"The last thing we want to see is the pristine Kimberley coast turned into an industrialised zone with a series of LNG plants littering the landscape," she said.

Her comments come after Kimberley indigenous tourism operators voiced their alarm over the project last month.