



Woodside's Pluto development wins Federal approval

12-October-07 by AAP

The federal government has given approval for Woodside's Pluto gas development in Western Australia to proceed on strict environmental conditions.

The Woodside Pluto development will inject \$17.6 billion into the national economy, including up to 3,000 direct jobs during construction and a further 200 direct jobs and 3,000 indirect jobs during operation, Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull said in a statement.

"The decision to grant environmental approval for the Pluto project will ensure that industry development can proceed with environmental conditions to protect threatened and migratory species, ecological communities and the commonwealth marine environment," he said.

"Environment and heritage protection can be balanced with economic and industry development. One does not have to come at the expense of the other."

The Woodside development involves construction of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) processing facility on the Burrup Peninsula with the gas transported onshore via a pipeline from the Pluto gas field, around 190 kilometres north-west of Karratha in Western Australia.

The environment conditions attached to the decision include requirements for management plans to mitigate any impacts on threatened species, notably the Olive Python, sea turtles and other marine mammals.

Woodside will also be required to put in place management plans to protect the commonwealth marine environment, including dredging and spoil disposal management plan, an oil spill contingency plan, as well as offshore drilling operations, construction, installation and operations management.

Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane said in the statement the Pluto project would stimulate the local region, with an estimated 28 per cent of the workforce for the development residing locally.

The statement said that minimum targets for indigenous participation in the project, including in the construction and operational workforce and local supply contracts, would encourage the long-term development of the local indigenous community.

The full text of a Woodside announcement is pasted below

PLUTO RECEIVES ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL

Woodside has been advised by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water Resources that environmental approval for the Pluto LNG Project has been granted.

Commonwealth environmental approval is the last of the key State and Federal environmental and heritage approvals required for the project to proceed. This approval allows for construction of the Pluto LNG Project to be commenced.

Other regulatory approvals continue to be received in line with expectations.