

# Locals raise worries with LNG taskforce

By FRIEDA Mc LOUGHLIN

THE taskforce set up to examine industrial development in the Kimberley is likely to recommend a single processing hub be developed to process LNG from the Browse Basin.

The Northern Development Taskforce, which held its first public forum in Broome last week, said development of a big hub more than 1000ha in area would cater for all potential producers, removing the need for facilities to be spread around the region.

The taskforce said this would ensure minimal environmental impact while ensuring the full potential of the Browse Basin was realised.

A packed room of concerned and spirited local stakeholders and community members were told the taskforce was still gathering data and could not yet estimate a finishing date.

Taskforce chairman Jim Limerick said the data indicated the Browse Basin was comparable to, if not bigger than, the North-West Shelf in terms of oil and gas potential and that one

big hub would ensure long term sustainability and gain for the economy while minimising environmental impact.

"We have just one chance to get this right ... we've seen that these sites do work, proponents share infrastructure and come together," Dr Limerick said.

"It is extremely important for Australia to secure gas security ... in light of the recent gas production shut-down at Burrup which supplies almost 70 per cent of the State's gas demands."

Development options covered at the forum included both offshore and onshore processing plants. An offshore facility on Scott Reef remained a contender.

A floating LNG facility which would accommodate all gas processing on a massive deck space seemed unlikely under current time constraints as it was yet to be trialled.

The taskforce said the option of pumping gas from the Browse Basin to either the Pilbara or Darwin was still on the table though the cost of piping and the unstable nature of

the gas were substantial deterrents to this approach.

An onshore hub in the Kimberley region had been narrowed down to three or four sites, though the taskforce would not name them.

An audience of more than 60 people raised a range of concerns with the taskforce.

Conservationist Richard Costin said he was worried the entire Kimberley coast was pegged for development which hinged on using gas as energy.

Crocodile park owner Malcolm Douglas accused proponent Inpex of displaying "nothing but contempt" for Kimberley stakeholders.

"I beg you to pressure Inpex into accepting with all the other companies a one hub site and I'll fight this proposal until the day I die," he told the meeting.

Dr Limerick said Inpex had every right to go ahead with its proposal but it seemed the company was slowing down and had not yet submitted an environmental impact report.