

## Gas protesters accused of faking traditional owners

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Environmental groups have been accused of "mischievously" misrepresenting traditional owners during a protest against a proposed gas development on the Maret Islands. (ABC TV)

Environmental groups in Western Australia's Kimberley have been accused of "mischievously" misrepresenting traditional owners during a protest against a proposed gas development.

Green groups yesterday protested outside the Perth office of Japanese company Inpex which wants to build a gas plant on the Kimberley's Maret Islands in northern WA.

The Kimberley Land Council has been liaising with Inpex on behalf of the islands' traditional owners, the Wanambal Gambera people.

The council's executive director, Wayne Bergmann, has accused the conservationists of "passing off" two Kimberley Aboriginal men, Neil McKenzie and Albert Wiggam, as traditional owners at the protest.

"They need to go back to their areas and talk for their country, it is really disappointing, mischievous, and those environmental groups need to be ashamed of themselves for carrying on in such a manner," he said.

Chris Tallentire from the Conservation Council of Western Australia says the claim is unfounded.

He says, as traditional owners of the Kimberley, the men have a right to protest.

"Albert Wiggam and Neil McKenzie are as concerned about this project as anyone and as individuals, as traditional owners from the Kimberley," he said.