



Transcript

## Garrett Advocates Single Kimberley Gas Hub

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Reporter: Rebecca Carmody

The Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett and State Development Minister Eric Ripper have spent the last two days in the Kimberley as part of their big picture study of the region.

They've been speaking with the Kimberley Land Council and the traditional owners about the best site for a single gas processing hub in the region to allow companies to tap into the lucrative Browse Basin. The idea is to prevent piecemeal development along the pristine Kimberley coast but environmentalists are planning a campaign bigger than the Franklin River to stop it going ahead.

I spoke with Mr Garrett, in Broome, about the way forward.

Peter Garrett, does this trip of yours bring you any closer to identifying a gas processing hub in the Kimberley?

PETER GARRETT, FEDERAL ENVIRONMENT MINISTER: Well, the trip certainly increases my already existing sense that the Kimberley's a very special place. But when it comes to the ultimate location of a common user hub for LNG processing, that is a process that's being undertaken by the WA Government.

REBECCA CARMODY: Are you saying at this stage you do not have a preferred site for the hub?

PETER GARRETT: No, the Commonwealth's position is that we think it's preferable there be a common user hub for access by companies who are going to be taking resource out of the Browse Basin. And the search for that common user hub in terms of sites includes the Kimberley area and outside the Kimberley area as well.

Ultimately, I think everybody agrees that it's much better to have one single facility which can do this kind of industrial work so to prevent us seeing the kind of ad hoc developments that have characterised some decision making in the past. There must and there needs to be a better way of approaching issues of this complexity and magnitude.

But where the actual ultimate location of any facility might be will come about as a result of this process, not by me as the Federal Environment Minister identifying a site on TV to you tonight.

REBECCA CARMODY: The State Development Minister, Eric Ripper, has said that this project will not go ahead without the support of the traditional owners in the Kimberley. Is that your position as well?

PETER GARRETT: Yes, I think we are absolutely agreed, both the Commonwealth and West Australian Government, that the traditional owners here need to provide fully informed consent. And if that doesn't take place, then the proposal shouldn't go ahead.

REBECCA CARMODY: Does that mean that any one grouping of traditional owners along the entire Kimberley coast will have the power of veto over this project?

PETER GARRETT: Well, it depends very much on the process that's under way. What we're seeing happen at the moment, I think, is really important. And that is that you're seeing the Kimberley Land Council and the Western Australian Government work closely to ensure that there is adequate and thorough consultation with traditional owners and clearly where there is more than one side in contemplation that means talking to more than one group.

REBECCA CARMODY: But the Kimberley Land Council does not represent all traditional owners in that region. So if any of those other groupings say that they don't want this project to go ahead based on environmental and cultural concerns, does that mean the whole thing will fall over?

PETER GARRETT: Look, I think the way to properly understand the process here is to recognise that there will be a process whereby you start to identify which sites are more likely than others. That will happen with discussions between all relevant parties.

REBECCA CARMODY: Do you have an open mind about a second hub in the Kimberley?

PETER GARRETT: What I have an open mind about is that we've actually identified what I think is an absolutely first-class process for the Commonwealth Government and the Western Australian Government to assess the heritage values of the Kimberley whilst at the same time the site selection process for a common user hub is under way.

Look, anyone can bring forward a proposal. Any company can bring forward a proposal for a development along this stretch of coast or anywhere else for that matter and if that were to happen, of course it would be treated with due process as it should be under the appropriate and relevant legislation.

REBECCA CARMODY: Where, though, does that single hub concept leave Inpex, the Japanese energy company that wants to build its processing plant on the Maret Islands? Can they fit into that concept?

PETER GARRETT: The common user hub would be open to any company. Inpex do have a proposal to build on the Marets. That is something that is being considered at

the moment, in the ordinary course of business properly as it should be under relevant legislation.

REBECCA CARMODY: Do you support Inpex processing its gas on the Maret Islands?

PETER GARRETT: Well, I'm the decision maker ultimately on this decision so as a consequence I make no view about that issue at all, other than to say that their proposal will be looked at and considered absolutely thoroughly and properly, as it should, under the relevant legislation and if a decision is required to be made I have to consider whether there are impacts on matters of national environment significance and if that decision comes through to me, as I would with any proposal, would consider it on those grounds.

REBECCA CARMODY: Have you spoken to Inpex about its proposal?

PETER GARRETT: Inpex have been in to see me in the Parliament and we've had a meeting, yes.

REBECCA CARMODY: So is it your view then that if they're prevented from building on the Maret Islands would they walk away from Western Australia and take their multi-billion-dollar project to the Northern Territory? Is that the risk in refusing them?

PETER GARRETT: Look, what I've said to Inpex is very simple - that is that, we have a preference as the Western Australian Government does for a common user hub to be the best method of producing LNG from the Browse Basin. But at the same time their existing proposal for the development to be on the Maret Islands will be processed appropriately and properly, according to Commonwealth legislation and if the proposal is still afoot a decision will be made properly in this respect.