

Green award for LNG mining firm

By STEVEN HOUNSOME

THE company at the centre of a furore over proposed LNG processing in the Browse Basin off the Kimberley has received a national environmental award for its approach to development on the remote Maret Islands, drawing skepticism from environmental campaigners Save The Kimberley.

Inpex was one of two companies to receive the top environmental honour at the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association's annual conference last week in Perth.

APPEA director Mark McCallum congratulated the company on its "dedicated approach to ensuring as small an environmental footprint as possible" during drilling operations on the islands.

"Clearly the Inpex culture places a strong emphasis on innovation that is protective of the environment and cultural heritage and are deserved winners of the exploration environment award," Mr McCallum said.

Inpex external affairs general manager Sean Kildare said the company was a worthy recipient, given its commitment to exceeding proscribed environmental standards.

Mr Kildare said where a traditional onshore drilling project would have impacted more than 10 per cent of the islands, the use of a modified rig and BK117 helicopter ensured less than 0.1 per cent of the area was disturbed.

"If it's possible to reduce our impact on the environment at any



ACCLAIM: Inpex managing director Jiro Okada accepts the environment award at last week's APPEA conference.

level – be it via technology, expertise or just plain hard work – we will do it," he said.

But Save The Kimberley spokesman Mark Jones said Inpex was not deserving of the honour.

"We find it nepotism at its finest that industry gives industry an award such as this," he said.

Mr Jones acknowledged the footprint at this stage was small

but said that would change if LNG processing went ahead. "It will take over the whole island and will be catastrophic," he said.

He also said the technology which won praise for Inpex was not revolutionary, having been available for the past 40 years.

Other nominees for the award included Woodside, BHP Billiton, ExxonMobil and Chevron.