

Woodside hosts forum

By STEVEN HOUNSOME

ABOUT 40 stakeholders were invited to evaluate criteria for future LNG development at a recent meeting in Broome hosted by Woodside, but a leading Kimberley environmental group sat out of the process saying the resource company was starting from the wrong premise.

The June 13 meeting was part of Woodside's ongoing evaluation of five development options.

These include sending gas onshore to the Kimberley, to the Burrup Peninsula, to Darwin, processing offshore or via a floating facility.

Attendees were asked to consider economic, social and environmental aspects of each option and used a numbering system to establish the most important criteria.

The results will assist the company compile a sustainability report, which will then identify a final development concept.

But Environs Kimberley director Maria Mann chose to attend the meeting only briefly.

"We for some time have asked them to extend the five (development options) to include no development or processing at other sites in the Pilbara," she said.

"We made the request and they rejected it so we decided not to complete the exercise."

Ms Mann declined to nominate a preference for any of the development options, saying broader values

needed to be looked at first. Woodside's assessment process indicated a lack of faith in State and Federal assessments, Ms Mann said.

"It's a shame the government process isn't stronger, to satisfy industry groups," she said.

Shire president Graeme Campbell said he was comfortable with Woodside's process.

He said the Shire did not have a preferred processing option, and would await further reports.

"A hub would concern us on the impact it would have on housing, workers, infrastructure and social aspects," Cr Campbell said.

Broome Airport general manager Nick Belyea said it was important Broome be recognised as a hub for industry.

"The more aircraft schedules we have the more it enhances choice, affordability and the prospects of an international service," he said. "I'd be concerned if it went to a remote location. Fly-in, fly-out won't bring many benefits to the community."

Woodside community relations advisor John Williams declined to comment on the likelihood of a fly-in, fly-out workforce but said future meetings and reference groups would be held to ensure all stakeholders stayed informed.

Woodside's LNG development consists of three gas fields about 425km north-west of Broome which together are estimated to contain 18 trillion cubic feet of dry gas.