

# Nine options for LNG hub

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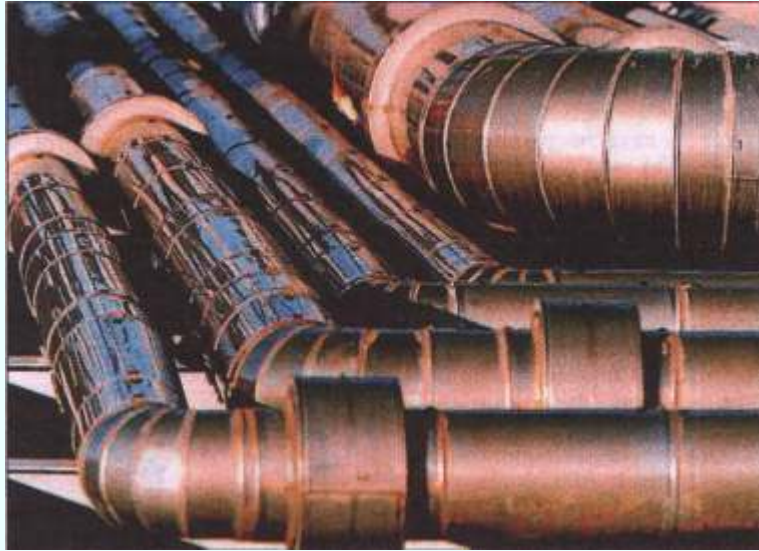
The federal and West Australian governments have identified nine potential sites for a processing hub to serve the Browse Basin in the environmentally sensitive Kimberley region.

The two governments announced in February that they had agreed to subject the entire Kimberley region to an assessment under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The aim of the assessment will be to plan for a common-user liquefied natural gas hub and associated activities in the region to service the massive Browse Basin, which is estimated to contain about one-third of Australia's offshore gas reserves, and thereby avoid the piecemeal development on environmentally sensitive Burrup Peninsula.

It follows a public outcry in WA last year at proposals by Woodside and others to produce LNG on the Kimberley coastline at several locations, and Japanese oil company Inpex developing plans to build a plant on the remote Maret Islands, off the Kimberley coast.

Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett and WA Minister for State Development Eric Ripper said yesterday work to identify a hub site for LNG to service the Browse Basin had



**The plan avoids piecemeal processing of Browse Basin LNG.** Photo: MICHELE MOSSOP

reached a milestone, with an interim report identifying nine sites for further technical investigation and assessment of Aboriginal heritage, cultural values and environmental considerations. The sites are: Gourdon Bay, Quondong Point, James Price Point, North Head; Perpendicular Head; Packer Island, Koolan Island, Wilson Point, and the Maret Islands.

The report says the sites are being reviewed by the Kimberley Land Council's Traditional Owner Taskforce. The traditional owners have asked that the Northern Development Taskforce reconsider

Cape Voltaire and evaluate the Anjo Peninsula, north of Cape Bougainville, for a potential hub site. The assessment concedes some of the sites only offer enough land for a single-operator single LNG plant, but it believes a single processing hub may be viable "if a site with sufficient land area can be identified and is acceptable to the traditional owners".

A multi-user hub could involve one of the biggest infrastructure outlays by the federal government in years. A decision on a shortlist is expected early in August.