

Announcement of potential gas hub sites

THE location of a proposed LNG processing hub on the Kimberley coast may be known as early as next month, since Kimberley traditional owners announced a shortlist of potential sites.

Kimberley Land Council executive director Wayne Bergman said the short-listing process had involved an exhaustive consultation process with 14 native title groups across the Kimberley.

The four short-listed sites announced by KLC are Gourdon Bay, James Price Point, North Head and Anjo Peninsula.

Mr Bergman said the traditional owners in the four shortlisted areas would continue the consultation process with the Government and resource companies to ensure communities gained long-term benefits.

“That will mean more than a one-off compensation deal. It will mean ongoing economic benefits and continuing control by traditional owners of how development will proceed,” Mr Bergman said.

However, one indigenous group claims the KLC’s dealings with parts of the community have been secretive and not necessarily in the wider community’s best interests.

Kandiwal Aboriginal Corporation public officer Chris Brown said he felt the KLC had joined forces with the State Government in wanting to take the money and run, largely ig-

noring the environmental value of the Kimberley.

Mr Brown said a number of people had been turned away from important meetings held by KLC recently, something he believes suggests the KLC has something to hide.

Mr Bergman said the KLC had conducted a “huge consultation process” to ensure traditional owners were in a position to make informed decisions about gas development.

He said the allegations were disappointing and misleading, and while the KLC may have turned certain people away from meetings, it had nothing to do with being secretive.

He said a taskforce of traditional owners had been put together to ensure gas development discussions reflected the interests of all Kimberley coastal groups, and those people turned away were probably not part of that taskforce.

“People have been elected to represent the traditional owner groups.

“Those traditional owners who haven’t wanted gas have had their areas taken off the map,” Mr Bergman said.

It is understood the State Government’s Northern Development Taskforce is hoping to make a final decision on the LNG processing hub site by October.