

Inpex committing to Darwin

Friday, 19 September 2008

INPEX will reportedly announce next week its decision to choose Darwin as the site of the Ichthys liquefied natural gas plant.

The *Northern Territory News* quoted a source as saying that Japanese major Inpex would tell the Northern Territory government on September 25.

The company added that senior executives were in Darwin yesterday for talks with the government.



Darwin Port

While Inpex had originally planned to build a liquefaction plant on the Maret Islands off the Kimberley region to process gas from the Browse Basin project, the Japanese major is believed to have already decided on building the plant in Darwin after being held back by the previous WA government's bureaucracy and red tape.

This contrasts sharply with the Northern Territory government's commitment to securing the project, which has seen it streamlining environmental and planning approvals, providing land at Middle Arm and ensuring port access.

While new WA Premier Colin Barnett has said he will hold talks with Inpex today in a bid to keep the project in his state, he conceded that a decision had already been made to build the plant in Darwin.

Ichthys has been assessed to hold 12.8 trillion cubic feet of gas and 527 million barrels of condensate though the project may receive a boost from the recent Mimia-1 discovery made by Inpex and Total SA in the nearby WA-344-P permit, about 20km from the northern edge of Ichthys.

Inpex holds 76% of Ichthys and 60% of WA-344P. Total has the remaining 24% and 40% stakes.

The two companies hold other acreage near Ichthys and plan further exploration.