

Darwin traditional owners clash over Inpex development

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Last week's announcement on the Inpex development has sparked a war of words between the two groups representing interests of Darwin's traditional owners.

On Friday, the Japanese energy company announced plans to build a \$12 billion gas plant at Blaydin Point on Darwin Harbour.

The project has the backing of the Larrakia Development Corporation, which calls itself the business arm of the Larrakia people.



The Larrakia Nation says the Inpex plant, planned for Blaydin Point on Darwin Harbour, is incompatible with its environmental standards. (Cathy Harner)

The corporation says it has an understanding with Inpex to give job priority to qualified Larrakia people.

The corporation says its affiliated companies, such as Saltwater Constructions, are set to pick up contracts associated with the plant, and Inpex will also contribute towards a trades school for Indigenous people.

But the corporation's support for Inpex has been slammed by Larrakia Nation, which calls itself the representative group of the Larrakia people.

On the weekend, the Larrakia Nation group published an open letter in a Darwin newspaper stating the plant was incompatible with Larrakia culture and its environmental standards.

It also said that the corporation has no right to support the Inpex gas plant on behalf of all Larrakia people.

But the CEO of the Larrakia Development Corporation, Greg Constantine, has hit back at the claims.

Mr Constantine says his organisation represents all Larrakia, while the Larrakia Nation is a membership based group.

"They represent their members and they're entitled to put their point of view across, however they choose fit.

"We work for all Larrakia.

"The Northern Land Council is, in fact, the representative body for all Larrakia, and we're actually trying to find ways of improving lifestyles, employment, business development, economic development for all Larrakia.

"What we're trying to do is establish the best opportunities for all Larrakia."

Mr Constantine says his organisation has no special powers to ensure proper environmental controls, but will be watching the assessment process.

The Australian Greens will also be keeping a keen eye on the environmental assessment process.

Senator Scott Ludlum says the party is worried the project will have a negative impact on Darwin Harbour, and says the party will urge government not to forsake the local marine environment in the name of development.

"There's no question at all there will be impacts and there will be costs.

"The Government and the developers are all very keen always to talk up the benefits, and they're always quite reticent to talk up and calculate the cost to the community, so it's very important that happens, that process."