

Barnett names preferred LNG site

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Premier Colin Barnett has named North Head as his preferred site for a gas processing precinct to serve the Browse Basin, off the Kimberley coast in the state's north.

Mr Barnett today said he was keen to develop the area as soon as possible after Japanese company Inpex decided to build a multibillion-dollar processing plant in the Northern Territory instead of WA.

North Head, 125km north of Broome, is a dense migratory habitat for humpback whales and is within an Aboriginal reserve.

A report by the previous Labor government's Northern Development Taskforce said the overall sensitivity of the marine environment at North Head was considered to be high to very high.

Mr Barnett said today the environment would not be compromised.

He said gas processing platforms would most likely be located up to 300km offshore.

"The necessary environmental work will be done," Mr Barnett said.

"We're talking about 2,000 acres in an area twice the size of Victoria."

He said he would welcome further research on marine sensitivity in the area called for yesterday by the Western Australian Marine Science Institution.

The institution is seeking \$110 million in funding to further its work along the Kimberley coastline.

The taskforce has recommended four suitable sites and a 28-day comment period will follow.

However, Mr Barnett said North Head was the most suitable and commercially convenient.

More to come..

The announcement is pasted below:

The Barnett Government today released the Northern Development Taskforce's Site Evaluation Report on four potential sites for an LNG precinct in the Kimberley.

Released for a 28-day public consultation process, the report earmarks the four sites that best meet the criteria as Gourdon Bay, south of Broome, James Price Point and North Head, both on the Dampier Peninsula and Anjo Peninsula, on the far north Kimberley coast.

Premier Colin Barnett said each site had issues which would need to be addressed by Government, but the necessary work would be done to see the final site confirmed as quickly as possible.

"An LNG precinct site must be selected to enable the growth and prosperity of Western Australia," Mr Barnett said.

"It is a responsibility that has been neglected for the past eight years, but the State Government will ensure a decision is made in the best interests of the State.

"The four proposed sites have been identified after extensive consultation with stakeholders from the community, including environmental groups, the Aboriginal community, the tourism industry, local government, fisheries and aquaculture representatives.

"It's an indictment on the previous government that in eight years it could not select a site for developments to allow the growth of WA.

"For example, if government was better managed in the past, a site could have been selected and WA would not have lost the INPEX project, worth more than \$24billion to the State."

The Premier acknowledged the commitment and effort of the Aboriginal community in helping identify the sites in a constructive and timely manner.

Public submissions on the site options can be made until November 11.