

## Government targets Aboriginal site for LNG precinct

- **Chris Thomson**
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Premier Colin Barnett today said selecting an Aboriginal-owned site at North Head for a Liquefied Natural Gas precinct would give WA the best chance of prising back projects like the Inpex gas processing plant seemingly lost to Darwin.

"We are not talking very much land at all," Mr Barnett said.

"Two-and-a-half thousand acres of land in an area (the Kimberley) twice the size of Victoria is a very small footprint."

Mr Barnett said the 1000ha site, which sits north of the Aboriginal community of Beagle Bay, was the Government's preferred location.

The Premier today released the Northern Development Taskforce's evaluation of 11 possible sites for an LNG processing precinct in the Kimberley.

He said North Head was the best site because of its separation from Broome, the presence of a nearby airstrip and its proximity to the Ichthys and Browse LNG projects.

Downsides included the site's Aboriginal ownership, which Mr Barnett said could be resolved either through negotiation or compulsory acquisition.

Mr Barnett said discussions had already commenced with the Aboriginal community and the office of Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett.

Aside from North Head, the taskforce also shortlisted Gourdon Bay south of Broome, James Price Point 58km north of Broome and Anjo Peninsula on the far north Kimberley coast.

Japanese-owned Inpex had planned to pipe gas 200km from the Browse Basin gas field to a proposed LNG plant on WA's pristine Maret Islands, but a facilitation agreement was instead signed with the NT government.

If the Darwin site is ultimately chosen, the gas will be piped 909km to a new LNG plant at Middle Arm in Darwin Harbour.

Mr Barnett again blamed the former state Labor government for the loss of the Inpex project, which he blamed on an eight-year delay over the choice of a common user site.

The Premier said a final decision on a site for the LNG precinct would be made before the end of 2008, after submissions from a 28-day consultation period starting today had been assessed.