

Landowners claim \$1.2b offer was not passed on

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Traditional landowners have claimed the Kimberley Land Council failed to pass on details of a \$1.2 billion offer from the proponents of a major gas processing plant that has since been moved interstate.

In a written offer sent to land council executive director Wayne Bergmann in November last year, Japanese resource company Inpex offered the Uunguu people infrastructure, royalties and cash payments worth \$1.2 billion over the life of the project.

But it is understood the KLC never responded to the offer and it was withdrawn.

The Uunguu people are the traditional owners of the uninhabited Maret Islands, the preferred site for Inpex's \$25 billion gas processing plant. They signed an agreement with Inpex in November 2007 over how to proceed with the negotiations. But in September, Inpex announced it was moving the project to Darwin.

Kalumburu councillor and traditional owner Sebastian Djanghara said he was disappointed the community had not been told about the offer, because the money could have changed the face of the community.

Former councillor Bruce Oxtoby said he was not aware of anyone who knew about the offer, saying he was "pissed off" that the KLC had not presented it to locals.

Mr Bergmann said he had detailed the offer to the landowners during a meeting at the beginning of the year, attended by about 60 people including elder Basil Djanghara, Sebastian Djanghara's father.

But Mr Djanghara Snr said that while he had attended a meeting, he had not been told about the offer.

Mr Bergmann said he had not had a chance to respond to the offer because it had been withdrawn last December. But *The West Australian* understands that the offer was withdrawn in May.

Inpex declined to comment.