

# Door ajar for Inpex: Premier

**PETER KERR**

The global economic slowdown may allow WA to win back a \$25 billion gas processing plant originally planned for the Kimberley, Colin Barnett says.

The Premier said yesterday that the Government was hoping to nominate its preferred site for a Kimberley LNG hub before Christmas to clear the way for a possible return of the project, owned by Japanese firm Inpex, from Darwin.

The LNG plant was lost to the Northern Territory because of the State's often arduous mining approvals process and Mr Barnett has promised to streamline it to ensure that long

approval delays did not derail resource projects.

He said two sites, Woodside's preferred North Head and James Price Point, closer to Broome, were the most likely locations for a hub of four sites.

Mr Barnett said a quick decision on the site would leave the door slightly ajar for attracting Inpex back to WA.

"If the State Government can secure a site maybe this current economic environment may slow down Inpex's project and they may have another look at it because there's a massive cost and some technical risk in piping the gas that far to Darwin," he said.

He rejected suggestions that

he was railroading the process, saying he was interested only in attracting investment to WA and that he would negotiate in good faith with Aboriginal communities.

"I am trying to get investment in this State and long term benefits for Aboriginals," he said.

The Opposition said local Aboriginal communities were not happy with the speed of the process.

"I have met Kimberley Land Council executive director Wayne Bergmann and they are disappointed with the approach the Premier is taking," shadow energy minister Kate Doust said.