



## Gas development in the Kimberley to change lives

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### But will it be for better or worse? Trouble brews in paradise



#### Beached

The Dampier Peninsula, north of Broome, is densely wooded country and where the bush meets the sea there are long stretches of white sand or looming red cliffs.

Part of the peninsula, at Pender Bay, is earmarked for a large gas processing plant. Woodside needs to build the facility to develop its valuable Browse Basin project. There's a wealth of oil and gas under the ocean. The Pender Bay site is one of seven shortlisted.

There's about a half a dozen small Aboriginal communities in the Pender Bay area, about 150 kilometres north of Broome, that would be directly affected by the building of an LNG plant.

Some families have made their bush block a going concern through opening it up to tourism, while others are struggling on the poverty line. **Either way, if a gas facility is built there the lives of these people will change.**

Opinion is divided on whether that will be for better or worse.

Bard man **Lennie O'Meara** has lived at Munget, overlooking Pender Bay, with his partner and children for eight years, but his family's ties to the land goes back decades. They operate camel safaris and have plans for an art gallery or cafe. The gas plant would be less than two kilometres from Lennie's front door and he predicts an irreversible loss of environment and heritage if it goes ahead.

Next door to Lennie is the small community of Embalgun. There lives **William Smith** and up to 25 family members. William Smith sees a gas plant as a golden opportunity to break the poverty cycle. He wants secure jobs and self autonomy from welfare.

On the other side of Perpendicular Point are **Dave and Pat Channing** who run a fledgling tourism operation at Mercedes Cove. They moved from Mandurah four years ago to return to Pat's Barde homeland. She named Mercedes Cove after her late mother. A gas plant would be built right on top of their house. It's a prospect they are opposed to.

Close by is the bush block of Djugaragyn. **Deborah Sibosado and Steve Nicholas** have lived there for seven years running bush walking tours for international tourists. Deborah feels a deep connection to the land and learns from the country. They don't want a gas plant in the vicinity and would prefer an offshore site to be developed.

This is their story.