

## Land lease worry in gas plant plan

By DALE MILLER

THE State Government's intention to lease land from traditional owners to house any LNG industrial hubs in the North-West has been attacked by the Kimberley Land Council.

The model for land access preferred by the Government was listed as part of the terms of reference for the Northern Development Taskforce, which is looking at identifying suitable locations for at least one gas processing hub in the Kimberley.

Under the terms of reference, identified sites for gas proponents would be vested with traditional

owners but the land would be leased to the State for a period of 99 years.

State agency LandCorp would manage the development of any common-user hubs and access to the sites.

But KLC executive director Wayne Bergmann said traditional owners would fight to keep the right to negotiate directly with companies over resource deals on their custodial lands.

"We do not want another Burrup Peninsula where indigenous cultural sites have been destroyed," he said.

"Gas developments can have lifetimes of over 50 years and a direct relationship between traditional

owners and the companies involved is vital."

Mr Bergmann said traditional owners were best equipped to negotiate packages with long-term social and economic benefits that also protected environmental and cultural values.

The KLC is involved in negotiations with Japanese company Inpex over the company's plans to build an LNG processing plant on the Maret Islands – about 450km north-east of Broome.

State Development Minister Eric Ripper said the taskforce would ensure the rights of traditional owners were fully respected.