

Regional green pact

By GRANT WYNNE

GREEN groups and traditional owners have joined hands to work together to protect the Kimberley's cultural and environmental values as LNG companies ramp up efforts to develop gas off the Kimberley coast.

Local Kimberley and peak national environment groups joined traditional owners last Thursday at the signing of a joint position statement for the cultural and environmentally appropriate development of gas resources in the Kimberley region.

The Kimberley Land Council has taken a lead role in representing traditional land owners in a bid to gauge the impact of LNG development including meetings with State Government agencies and gas companies.

KLC executive director Wayne Bergmann said LNG development was one of the greatest pressures facing Kimberley indigenous people,

many of whom still remained in their cultural and home environment.

Mr Bergmann welcomed the alliance with environment groups as an opportunity to make informed decisions.

"These are 50 to 100 year projects and we need to make sure we get it right," he said.

"So by standing together with environmental groups, we want to make sure we get access to good information so that we can make decisions based on good information.

"The bottom line is any development must deliver long-term opportunities and benefits for our people and our communities, while at the same time respecting and protecting cultural and environmental values.

"Any development must leave a significant and lasting positive legacy for our people."

KLC, Environs Kimberley, the Australian Conservation Foundation, WWF-Australia, the Conservation Council of

WA and the Wilderness Society are all signatories to the statement which sets common principles for the parties to advocate.

Environs Kimberley director Maria Mann said the Kimberley was on the brink of losing its unique environment forever.

"It's really important that green groups and Aboriginal groups provide the type of leadership that's going to see the Kimberley develop and protected for future generations," she said.

"We've only got to look around the word and to see the effects of global climate change to see what the impact of not looking after the country properly has caused.

"We've got an opportunity here in the Kimberley to look after it well and to provide some better leadership, to provide a better framework for developing it in such a way that it's going to prosper and still exist in thousands of years time."



GREEN ALLIANCE: Maria Mann, Wayne Bergmann and Paul Gamblin will work together to promote sustainable development in the Kimberley region.