

Darwin faces 'uphill battle' in bid for gas plant

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Northern Territory Chief Minister Paul Henderson says the Territory has strengthened its chances of winning a proposed new gas plant after meeting with major shareholders of the giant gas and oil company Inpex in Japan yesterday.

Inpex is considering sites on Western Australia's Kimberley coastline and at Middle Arm on Darwin Harbour for a multi-billion-dollar gas plant.

Mr Henderson says he told Inpex officials in Tokyo that Darwin has better infrastructure and transport facilities than its rival bidders.

But he says the Territory still faces an uphill battle despite the positive talks.

"We have very real positive attributes in being a capital city: land that's available, a defined environmental process and land at Middle Arm which is free of native title consideration," he said.

"We're still a chance. We are the underdog and I'm pleased with the outcome of the meeting.

"I'm very pleased that Inpex are going to be investing significant money to bring a proposition to the table and a final decision to be made based upon the commercial viability of the project."