

# Accord to guide gas

By STEVEN HOUNSOME

LNG and other resource developments in the Kimberley could be governed by an accord to be drawn up after a landmark meeting between stakeholders in Broome last week.

Television icon George Negus chaired the forum with Kimberley Land Council executive director Wayne Bergmann and Save the Kimberley spokesman Peter Tucker.

The event ran for most of Friday at Sun Pictures with about 80 people in attendance including representatives of the Northern Development Taskforce, Woodside and the WWF.

Mr Negus put forward the idea of an accord, inspired by the groundbreaking Oslo Accord in 1993 where Israel and the Palestinians laid down a framework for future relations.

Mr Negus said the idea won the support of those at the meeting.

He said the voice of environmental interests would be stronger if it came from an umbrella working group and he

had confidence unity could be achieved.

"We are dealing here with degrees of difference – not irreconcilable differences," he said.

"The danger will be if developers and government don't get involved it will be little more than a protest group."

But Mr Negus said ongoing negotiations should take place behind closed doors.

"The accord working group will be non-public because my experience is people grandstand, push barrows and big-note themselves when the media is involved," he said.

He also expressed concern that some parties were rushing to a judgement on the location of a single hub.

"The State Government is trying to jump the gun and get in before an environmental study is complete, which is absurd," he said.

Save the Kimberley's Peter Tucker shared concerns over the Government's timeframe.

But he said he had complete confidence the accord would go forward and he hoped a working group could be established

within the next six weeks.

But he said he did not believe all stakeholders would be keen to be included.

"I doubt the State Government would deal with an accord, they've got their own agenda," he said. "And the only way Inpex would come on board would be if the Government did and then they'd really be pressured."

Mining and Pastoral MLC Shelley Archer attended the meeting and praised the broadcaster for his efforts in bringing the various parties together.

"This collaborative effort is not about saying no to development," she said.

"It's about finding a way to develop the region that provides economic outcomes for our community but also respects indigenous culture and heritage (and) protects environmental assets."

Local campaigner Dave Dureau said he was disappointed more people had not attended. "There wasn't one person from local government," he said.



DISCUSSION: George Negus, Wayne Bergmann and Peter Tucker meet in Broome to talk about LNG development