

Inpex to make Ichthys decision by 3Q

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INPEX will decide on the site for its giant Ichthys field, off northwestern Australia, by the third quarter of this year.

"We will be making a decision by the end of the Japanese summer," general manager external affairs Sean Kildare told the SEAAOC Conference in Darwin on Friday.

Inpex is deciding between the LNG Maret Islands off the Kimberley coast and piping the gas almost 900km to Darwin for liquefaction.



An LNG tanker

Kildare also said that Inpex would this month complete its pre-feasibility study into the Darwin option, while a nearshore-harbour geotechnical study will be completed later this year.

He added that one obstacle to developing a major LNG project in northern Australia was the lack of significant infrastructure to support the development.

He said the best available infrastructure was located in Darwin, followed by the Kimberley region in Western Australia.

Other obstacles included the lack of fabrication capability in Australia, which forced developers to look to a few specialists to build modules overseas and the scarcity of onshore locations.

Kildare added that Inpex was looking at using a semisubmersible platform similar in size to BP's giant Thunderhorse platform in the Gulf of Mexico to develop Inpex.