

Kimberley Land Council calls for mining halt

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The Kimberley Land Council (KLC) wants all exploration and mining in the Kimberley put on hold until it completes an assessment of sites for the development of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant in the region.

The Council's executive director, Wayne Bergman, says there is a backlog of around 26,000 tenements to be released in Western Australia, many of which are in the Kimberley.

He is concerned developments may not be scrutinised thoroughly while the council's Traditional Owner Taskforce is focused on the proposed LNG development.

Mr Bergman says if the Government wants traditional owners to make an informed decision about a LNG hub in the region, all other development in the Kimberley must be put on hold.

"It is a huge pressure on Aboriginal people on the coast to consider further exploration and mining," he said.

"In the context of trying to make an informed decision about this, the State Government should put a moratorium on further exploration in the Kimberley."

The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies says it is unlikely the Government would grant a moratorium.

Chief executive Justin Walawski acknowledges the pressure the KLC is under but says everyone is in the same position.

"So we've got a large back log, very busy people and a lot of exploration and mining projects going on in the state," he said.

"So it's making it difficult for everyone to cope, but not withstanding that I think of the 14,000 tenements in the backlog, not all of those, in fact many of those wouldn't be in the KLC, so it's difficult to understand why they're unable to cope."