

# Shadow Minister in tour of Kimberley

By CHRIS HINGSTON

THE Federal shadow indigenous affairs minister Tony Abbott has highlighted native title negotiations as an area he would seek to improve after a fact-finding mission to the West Kimberley.

Mr Abbott visited the Kimberley for the first time last week, travelling with Kalgoorlie MHR Barry Haase to a range of communities including Looma, Fitzroy Crossing and the Dampier Peninsula's Lombadina.

Mr Abbott said he intended to reacquaint himself with the problems surrounding native title when

he returned to the nation's capital.

He said he was alerted to how native title negotiations had delayed the construction of the new Looma police station.

Native title negotiations in the Kimberley appeared "fraught" and could potentially become a "politically torturous process", he said.

Mr Abbott also spoke with members of the Fitzroy Crossing community about alcohol restrictions and representatives from multinational mining company Inpex.

He said alcohol abuse was a complex problem, but that he would be

instinctively inclined to support alcohol restrictions.

He said the fundamental issues underlying the use of alcohol needed to be examined and dealt with.

Mr Abbott said WA was at risk of losing the Inpex gas processing hub to Darwin.

He said the processing hub was a potential benefit for the region that should not be squandered.

"If they go to the NT it would be an economic loss for this region and indigenous communities," he said.



**FACT FINDING: Barry Haase and Tony Abbott visit Looma.**