

'Highly encouraging' uranium, gas discoveries in northern Australia

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The resource driven Territory economy could be boosted further by the significant discoveries of gas and uranium.

A South Australian based uranium company says it has found exceptional amounts of good quality uranium at a site in west Arnhem Land.

Uranium Equities Limited is in joint partnership with Cameco and says recent drilling near the old Nabarlek mine site, 270 kilometres east of Darwin, has produced great results.

The company's Managing Director Mark Chalmers says the grades and thickness of uranium found are similar to that at the nearby Ranger Mine in Kakadu National Park which produces a tenth of the world's uranium.

Mr Chalmers says the area will now probably be declared a deposit.

"We're going to do further exploration. It's too early to say absolutely whether its going to be a mine, but what we can say is the results are highly encouraging.

"There are some of the most significant results for that area around the Nabarlek mine in many years.

"We think the prospects are quite good to extend it even further."

He says the company is in talks with traditional owners and the Northern Land Council and the Northern Territory Government.

Inpex find more gas

And the discovery of a new gas field off the West Australian coast could be further good news for the Northern Territory economy.

An independent analyst says the discovery could make Darwin the frontrunner to be home for the multi-billion-dollar Inpex gas plant.

Inpex is considering Darwin and the Maret Islands off the Kimberley coast to pipe gas from the Ichthys field in the Browse Basin.

The company has announced its found another discovery just 20 kilometres from the field.

"The more gas they have on site in and around the Ichthys discovery, the more likely it is that they would be looking at long term infrastructure," says Peter Stratchan from Stock Analysis.

"If, for instance, it's going to cost an extra \$1 billion to build a pipeline to Darwin, through this new discovery at Mimia, that would give them additional project life."