

Scrutiny of NDT required

CRUNCH time for the Kimberley and the Australian Labor Party.

Premier Alan Carpenter's decision to call a snap election for the 6th of September will allow no time for proper public debate, scrutiny of the main election issues, and the Labor policies for development proposals now on the drawing board for the Kimberley.

While the election campaign will dominate the media, and the attention of the public for the next month, many Kimberley people are still acutely aware and concerned about the selection of an industrial hub site for the processing of LNG on the Kimberley coast.

Like most political campaigns, the Northern Development Taskforce process has been carefully planned and orchestrated. Eric Ripper has directed the Northern Development Taskforce to deliver a shortlist of suitable Kimberley sites by the end of the month. The site selection process has not allowed for consideration of alternate development sites such as the Pilbara, Scott Reef, Darwin or floating LNG.

The Northern Development

Taskforce is also directing and funding the Department of Environment and Conservation to conduct the scientific research, prepare reports and advise the EPA, the Minister for the Environment and Eric Ripper in a ridiculously short time frame, and in a manner that will undermine the credibility of the DEC as our State's environmental watchdog.

Eric Ripper, through the NDT, is also funding the KLC to conduct a consultative process for Aboriginal people in an equally ridiculous time frame.

Eric Ripper, Peter Garrett, Keiren MacNamara and the State Labor Party are under the spotlight. They are expected to fly around the Kimberley in the next week to consider their options.

Let's hope that the NDT selection process and the imminent announcements on development options for the Kimberley region attract the same scrutiny and media attention as the September State election and the Beijing Olympics.

**Richard Costin,
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