

## Heritage worth more than cash on gas pipeline route

NOT all West Australians nor all Kimberley Aborigines are mourning the decision of Inpex to pipe its gas from the Browse Basin to the Northern Territory ("Top End snatches \$24bn gas plant from under the West's nose", 27-28/9).

Many are applauding the decision not to bring the gas ashore at the Maret Islands for processing and exporting from the Kimberley coast.

Piping the gas to the NT will, at least for now, ensure that one of the great wilderness areas of the world will be kept intact.

The Kimberley Land Council has been stating that this decision is a huge loss for Kimberley indigenous people.

This is sad and wrong for a number of reasons.

First, that acceptable education and health services for Aboriginal people should depend on mining company royalties to the KLC; second, that the KLC is prepared to allow destruction of the most culturally significant and ancient rock art galleries in the world which are at the core of indigenous heritage and Australian pre-history; and third, that this beautiful Kimberley environment with its unique biodiversity, pristine rivers and coastline, so few people, no towns, virtually no access, can be bought for the airy promise of jobs and wads of money from multinational mining companies.

All Australians should be pressuring the federal and state governments for the Browse Basin gas to be piped from offshore to a southern industrial hub within Western Australia and with minimal environmental damage, and that governments should meet their responsibility of providing health services and education to some of Australia's most deprived people.

These services, taken for granted by other Australians, should not be reliant on the KLC being promised royalties and other hand-outs for selling off their treasured country.

There are some things in this world that should not be measured in dollars; the far northwest Kimberley is one of them.

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