

## WA vows to fight on for \$12 billion gas plant

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### **THE Battle for Inpex is not over, according to the Western Australians.**

Newly elected Liberal Premier Colin Barnett said he would do all he can to win back the project.

The Japanese resources giant has declared Darwin is the preferred destination for the gas from the Browse Basin.

But a final decision won't be made until the end of next year.

Mr Barnett criticised the Federal Government for allowing the Northern Territory Government to pinch the \$12 billion pipeline and processing project from his State.

He admitted that it was probably a long shot to get Inpex to change its mind and build the plant in WA, as originally planned.

"If a site could be established and cleared in every sense, then maybe commercial sense will prevail and they will be attracted to the lower cost option," he said.

The extraction of the gas - a \$13 billion project on its own - will all be in WA waters.

But the loss of the processing plant to Darwin has clearly irked the State government.

Inpex chose Darwin after WA failed to come up with a suitable site in time.

WA is expected to offer the Japanese resources giant a site near Broome.

But a well-placed Territory source said Inpex was spending up to \$30 million on preparing the Darwin site.

"Something extraordinary would have to happen for the project to go back to WA. The plant will be built in Darwin."

Inpex has taken the significant step of posting a board member, Seiya Ito, to Australia from its Tokyo headquarters.

Industry experts say nothing should be read into the fact he will be based in Perth because the gas field is in WA.

Mr Barnett and members of his government were quick to meet Mr Ito after he arrived.

An 850km undersea pipeline \_ the longest in the world \_ will be laid from the Browse Basin, off the Kimberley coast, to an LNG plant at Blaydin Point on Darwin Harbour.

The project is expected to produce more than eight million tonnes of LNG and 1.6 million tonnes of LPG per year.

It will also produce 100,000 barrels of condensate per day.

Inpex last month held a series of open community forums to explain the project to Territorians.