

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY FOR THE KIMBERLEY (“CHEAK”)



MEDIA RELEASE

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Industrialization not an Option for the Kimberley

Conservationists from around Australia met in Broome recently to celebrate the launch of a landmark Australian National University study *The Nature of Northern Australia*, and discuss options for protecting the Kimberley against the current push by mining and petroleum companies and some sectors of government to industrialize the region.

“Members of the Kimberley conservation alliance are non-government organisations who are campaigning for the long-term protection of the Kimberley - particularly the Kimberley coast - which is under enormous pressure from developers seeking to extract and sell LNG from the Browse Basin, iron ore from the Buccaneer Archipelago and bauxite from Mitchell Plateau,” said Maria Mann from Environs Kimberley.

“The study draws attention to the special natural values of northern Australia, recommends alternative approaches to land use and urges protection for these values before irreversible harm is done. It advises us to look at southern Australia for what not to do, and we are obviously keen to do just that,” she said.

“The alliance is calling for a commitment to a regional planning process from the State Government to package the way forward for the Kimberley,” said Larissa Cordner, Northern Campaigner for The Wilderness Society.

“At this stage we are optimistic that there may be a better way forward for Browse LNG development. For example, Woodside and some alliance members have agreed to regular meetings over the next few months, aimed at developing a better understanding of each other’s position and arrive at the most appropriate and workable solution for all concerned,” said Chris Tallentire from the Conservation Council of WA.

“This process will run in parallel with the State government’s northern development taskforce initiative. Both processes are valuable tools to finding a suitable outcome for all stakeholders,” Mr Tallentire said.

“The so-called ‘resources boom’ will hit the Kimberley hard,” said Kevin Blatchford from the Kimberley Marine Tourism Association.

“The petroleum and mineral resources of the region will be exploited by companies promising jobs and wealth. What they’re not so keen to discuss is the extent to which these activities will degrade the environment and cause harm to other industries in the region that are reliant on a healthy ecosystem.

“While we need to look more closely at the ‘hub’ concept suggested by the State government, one thing is for sure - the Maret Islands and Scott Reef are totally unacceptable locations. We look forward to working closely with all players and we challenge industry to come up with new technology - give us something to be proud of,” Mr Blatchford said.

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