



# Three good reasons to defer Kimberley gas hub decision

Public submissions on preferred hub sites close today

Environmentalists say there are now at least three good reasons why the Barnett government should defer any decision about the location of a gas hub for the Browse Basin project. Public submissions to the Northern Development Taskforce on preferred sites close today.

The Wilderness Society WA coordinator Peter Robertson said the combination of the global economic downturn, WA's new international Kimberley tourism promotion, and recent whale research findings all meant there was no good reason to rush the process of finding a site in the Kimberley.

“There is now no prospect of any Browse gas hub being needed for several years, so we do not need to make any hasty decisions about a Kimberley site. In fact, we can use this opportunity to look more carefully for sites outside the Kimberley where there is already industrial infrastructure in place, such as Port Hedland.

Piers Verstegen, Director of the Conservation Council said: “Yesterday’s announcement by Tourism Minister Liz Constable of a \$2.2 million tourism promotion highlighting the extraordinary natural landscapes of the Kimberley demonstrated yet again that the real future of the region is not fossil fuel industrialisation, but its unique natural and cultural values.

“This investment of taxpayers dollars will be wasted if we compromise the tourism potential of the Kimberley by dotting the coast with polluting industry.

Finally, recent whale research<sup>1</sup> has identified the exact locations Premier Barnett has singled out for a gas hub as being crucial to the Kimberley’s humpback whale population – a population now considered as perhaps the most important in the world.

Director of Environs Kimberley, Maria Mann said ‘This research documents the North Head area on the Dampier Peninsula as being a key part of the humpback’s calving and breeding habitat and as such it deserves full protection.

“Given that whale watching is becoming a thriving, sustainable tourism industry in the region, once again it would make no sense to compromise this by locating heavy industry in the area.”

Further comment:

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<sup>1</sup> Jenner et al; Geographic and Temporal Movements of Humpback Whales in Western Australian Waters, Centre for Whale Research (Western Australia) Inc.