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Barnett Disregards Process and Environment in Pre-Empting LNG Decision

Yesterday's announcement of a preferred site for an LNG processing hub in the Kimberley shows a fundamental disregard for due process, Indigenous rights and the environment from our new Premier Colin Barnett.

Conservation Council director Piers Verstegen said, "Whilst we support Premier Barnetts commitment to a single hub for LNG processing, we are extremely concerned that he has pre-empted the process by picking a site located adjacent to an internationally significant nursery for hump-back whales.

"The Northern Development Taskforce identified North Head as having many significant environmental impediments to development, including pristine coral reefs, mangroves forests and proximity to the Kimberley whale nursery."

"Premier Barnett's announcement of this location as a preferred site for development shows nothing but disregard for a process that has involved detailed scientific advice and important stakeholders, including the Traditional Owners who have participated in this process in good faith.

"Far from helping industry achieve the quickest environmental approval for an LNG hub, the Premier is risking picking the wrong location, leading to a long assessment process by the EPA that cannot meet all the legislative environmental requirements."

Dr. Jill StJohn from The Wilderness Society of WA said, "The Kimberley marine environment is one of the most pristine in the world and deserves the highest level of protection, especially iconic areas like the Kimberley whale nursery. North head is far too close to the Kimberley Whale Nursery."

"According to the NDT, development at North Head would also impact a number of other threatened species and their habitat; including dugongs and turtle nesting beaches."

Peter Mitchell, Chairperson of Environs Kimberley said "We are very concerned that the Premier has ignored due process in relation to the proposed LNG processing hub by naming North Head as his preferred site when none of the environmental assessments have been completed.

"It is also concerning that the rights of the Traditional Owners may be compromised by the Premiers overbearing approach.

"The magnificent environment of the Kimberley has taken uncounted millennia to be created; it is short-sighted folly to attempt to hasten the process of development for the sake of a few months or even years, due to pressure from industry or government."

Mr Verstegen said "We urge Mr Barnett to re-instate a solid science based consultation process to establish the best location for an LNG hub in the North West, including consideration of existing industrialised areas in the Pilbara"

"We also call for the Premier to reinstate the Traditional Owners right of veto over any proposed LNG hub site."

Comment:

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