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## **Government pressure for Kimberley LNG deal driven by politics not public interest**

Environment groups say today's announcement that the Premier's March 31 deadline for Traditional Owner agreement to a massive fossil fuel (LNG) hub near Broome could not be met was an opportunity to rethink the whole process.

Wilderness Society WA State Coordinator Peter Robertson said that environment groups, local communities and businesses and a range of other stakeholders have been frozen out of the Browse LNG process since the Barnett government came to office.

"Clearly the Kimberley Land Council is trying to negotiate the best possible outcome for Traditional Owners but it is being placed under enormous duress by the Premier because he has tied his political leadership to the construction of a Kimberley LNG hub.

"This kind of politically motivated decision making is guaranteed to produce bad outcomes across the board – especially for the Kimberley's globally recognised, unspoiled and highly valuable environment."

Conservation Council of WA Director Piers Verstegen said the Premier was trying to play 'Deal or No Deal' with one of the last remaining pristine coastal environments in the world.

"We strongly reject the Premier's repeated claims that only an LNG hub in the Kimberley can bring significant economic benefits to the region and its Indigenous people.

"A range of options for developing Kimberley gas reserves are still under consideration, including piping the gas to existing industrial sites in the Pilbara and the development of floating LNG facilities.

"These options may deliver a much better environmental outcome, and there is no reason why they could not deliver significant ongoing benefits for Kimberley Aboriginal communities as well.

"The State Government's own scientific assessment demonstrates that the world-class environmental values of the Kimberley coast are at least as significant as the Great Barrier Reef. Placing a massive industrial facility in this environment could foreclose genuinely sustainable enterprises that would provide employment for many generations to come."

Director of Broome based environment group Environs Kimberley, Martin Pritchard, said "If the Premier's proposal went ahead it would be an environmental disaster for the Kimberley with the dredging and blasting of kilometers of reefs and seabed and the clearing of 3,000 hectares of pindan woodlands containing rare plant communities and animals."

**Further comment: Peter Robertson – 0409 089 020; Piers Verstegen – 0411 557 892 Martin Pritchard - 0427 548 075**