

MEDIA RELEASE - 4 December 2009



BROWSE LNG – “HEADING FOR A TRAIN WRECK”

“The Federal and WA State Governments are showing increasing desperation in their mission to open up the Kimberley for industrialisation,” said Environs Kimberley Director, Martin Pritchard. He was commenting on the ‘use it or lose it’ conditions the Federal and State governments have issued to oil and gas companies with Browse Basin leases, to force them to choose a site in the Kimberley for their gas processing plant.

“This shows complete disregard for the strategic environmental assessment still underway,” said Mr Pritchard.

The assessment, by the State and Federal Governments, is expected to show which development option will have least environmental impact– Kimberley, Pilbara or floating LNG plant.

“The Minister for Industry, Martin Ferguson, is leading the charge on behalf of the Federal Government to industrialise the Kimberley. We are talking about an area with globally significant environmental values, including a Humpback Whale calving ground” said Mr Pritchard.

“WA Premier Colin Barnett was accused of holding a gun to the heads of Kimberley Traditional Owners to force a deal; now we have Minister Ferguson holding a gun to the heads of Joint Venture partners Chevron, Shell, BP and BHP Billiton,” Mr Pritchard said.

“With massive developments like Gorgon already out of the starters blocks you really need to question Ferguson’s tactics. Why is he in such a hurry to get a gas plant in the Kimberley? It can only be in order to get other destructive industries off the ground here. We know that bauxite, lead, zinc, coal and uranium are here, and to develop them, a source of energy like gas is needed,” said Mr Pritchard.

“The Federal Government and the JV partners must understand that the Browse project is heading towards a train wreck if the strategic environmental assessment isn’t followed as set out in the agreement signed by the State and Federal governments, and according to State and Federal environmental legislation.

“Martin Ferguson doesn’t seem to realise that he is setting up this project for a protracted legal battle. Instead of providing certainty to shareholders and investors, he’s doing the opposite,” said Mr Pritchard.

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