



MEDIA RELEASE

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Mitchell Plateau mining plans under threat from Woodside Browse project delays

An extension for Rio Tinto and Alcoa to draft development plans for bauxite mining in the Kimberley's Mitchell Plateau by the Western Australian government demonstrate how such plans are inextricably linked to the development of the offshore oil and gas industry.

"No matter which way Alcoa and Rio Tinto look at it, they're going to need massive volumes of water and a cheap power source before bauxite mining on the Mitchell Plateau and an alumina refinery start to look viable," Environs Kimberley Director Martin Pritchard said today.

"These companies will be looking to see whether the LNG proposal will go ahead, providing a power source for their plans for an alumina refinery. I'd encourage them also to look at the strenuous community opposition to the gas and have a long hard think about whether they're prepared to weather the same storm of public opposition in order to pursue mining plans on the Mitchell Plateau," Mr Pritchard continued.

"The Mitchell Plateau is nothing short of extraordinary and no place for a new outpost of bauxite mining or an alumina refinery. This is true now, and it will still be true in two years time when this latest extension runs out. Australians are waking up to just how special the Kimberley is, and that it is under serious threat of industrialisation by plans such as those to mine the mighty Mitchell Plateau," Mr Pritchard said.

State government reports from 2005 show plans for an alumina refinery near Broome powered by Browse Basin gas to process bauxite from the Mitchell Plateau.¹

"This extension is also at odds with the Western Australian government's long-promised plans for a world-class wilderness park across the region's spectacular land and sea country. The Mitchell Plateau must surely feature amongst any such conservation plans," Mr Pritchard concluded.

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¹ WA Government (2005) Regional Minerals Program *Developing the West Kimberley's Resources* (Page 132)