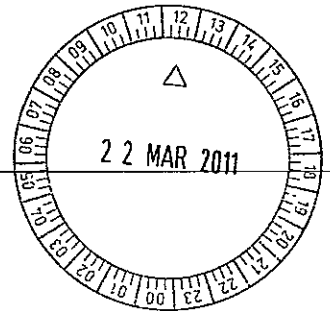


PUBLIC



Premier of Western Australia

Our Ref: 24-71333

Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear *Brian*,
Mr Ellis

PETITION NO 99 – INDUSTRIAL LNG PRECINCT AT JAMES PRICE POINT

I refer to your 16 February 2011 request for a response to the above petition referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs.

There is a section of the community that does not support development of the Browse LNG Precinct and I respect their right to express that view. Nonetheless, a comprehensive and meaningful community consultation process has occurred to date and continues to take place.

I note that the petition and the subsequent submission of the principal petitioner were submitted ahead of the public release for comment of the Browse LNG Precinct Strategic Assessment Report (SAR). The public review process satisfies the requirements of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986 (State)* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)*. The SAR and its appendices contain a comprehensive description of the consultation which has been undertaken to date.

I also offer the following additional comments on the specific points raised in the petition for your consideration:

Point 1 – do not support an industrial or LNG hub at James Price Point

The petition contends that insufficient consideration of the technical and economic viability of alternative scenarios was undertaken and that little consultation has taken place.

The SAR (Part 2, Section 4), describes the site selection process including consideration of the viability of alternative development scenarios. Furthermore, appendix B-7 of the SAR, a *Comparative Analysis of the Feasibility of Alternative Locations for the Development of a Liquefied Natural Gas Precinct*, includes analysis of sites in the Pilbara and Northern Territory, and of floating LNG. It concludes that “Economics dictate that any proposed site greater than 500 kilometres from the gas field is prohibitively expensive to develop from a green field situation”.

Point 2 – are concerned about the lack of broad consultation with the Broome community

The petition contends that a significant proportion of the population has been omitted from consultations.

As noted, a comprehensive community engagement process is ongoing, a summary of which is given at Appendix A. Consultation has occurred in three phases:

Northern Development Taskforce

- Broad consultation occurred as part of the site selection process with public meetings held in both Broome and Derby.

Strategic Social Impact Assessment

- The Strategic Social Impact Assessment process involved consultation with community and key stakeholders including the elected Shire Council.

Strategic Assessment Report

- Community consultation around the Strategic Assessment is on-going. This includes a 14 week formal public comment period supported by community information sessions during which the community is actively encouraged to make submissions on the social and environmental information presented. The SAR and responses to public submissions will be independently assessed by both the State Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPAC).

I believe the community consultation process for the Browse LNG Precinct is consistent with the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources' *Principles for Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders* of communication, transparency, collaboration, inclusiveness and integrity.

Point 3 – are concerned that no formal and direct consultation by the State Government as the Project Proponent has occurred

The petition contends that the Government has not explained how it can be both proponent and assessor of the project.

The EPA is an independent authority appointed by the Governor and is not subject to the direction of the Minister or Government. The assessment process is clearly defined in the Strategic Assessment Agreement signed by the State and Commonwealth Governments in February 2008 (see SAR Part 1, figure 3-1 'Strategic Assessment process'). Under this Agreement the State (EPA) and Commonwealth (SEWPAC) independently assess the proposal and must also be satisfied as to the level of community consultation during the process.

Point 4 – are concerned at the limited period that the strategic assessment will be available for public comment

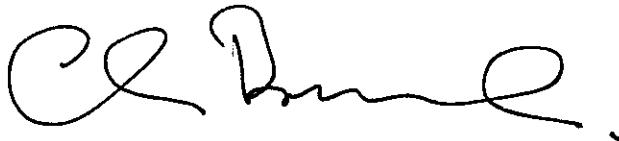
The SAR was released for public comment on 13 December 2011 for a period of 12 weeks (4 weeks being the minimum statutory period) in recognition of the Christmas period and the considerable content. It was released at the earliest opportunity once completed to the satisfaction of the Department of State Development, the EPA, and the Commonwealth Government.

PUBLIC

The public review period has been extended to 28 March 2011 to allow for comment on supplementary modelling information requested by the EPA and released in February.

In concluding, I note that the site selection and strategic assessment process for the Browse LNG Precinct has received international attention due to the quality and comprehensiveness of the process. I believe that this has been a process of the highest integrity and I would be pleased to submit further detail as you require.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Barnett', with a small flourish at the end.

Colin Barnett MLA
PREMIER; MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

17 MAR 2011

PUBLIC

Browse LNG Precinct Summary of Community Consultation Events
(excludes the range of activities specifically to engage Traditional Owners)

Northern Development Taskforce

- October 2007 – issues scoping workshop was attended by the environmental Non-Government Organisations, the Kimberley Land Council, the tourism sector and members of the community.
- February 2008 – a public forum and community reference group meeting was held.
- March 2008 – draft Terms of Reference for Strategic Assessment and Site Selection Criteria released for public comment.
- July 2008 – a three day site evaluation workshop was hosted in Broome and attended by a range of stakeholders.
- November 2008 – advice from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) concluded that the environmental impacts would be most manageable in the James Price Point area. In comparison to other sites assessed, this area demonstrated least risk to the surrounding area.
- 22 December 2008 – the James Price Point area was announced as the State's preferred site for the Browse LNG Precinct.

Strategic Social Impact Assessment

- May 2009 and 2010 – the North West Expo events in Broome (with similar participation planned for 2001).
- 17 September 2009 – the Department of State Development Social Impact Assessment Open Day provided opportunity to ask questions of the key components of the Strategic Social Impact Assessment, including fishing, tourism and planning.
- 18 and 19 September 2009 – the Shire LNG Forum, a Friday and Saturday forum for community members to find out more from both those who support the project as well as those who did not.
- January 2010 – Friday and Saturday information sessions at each of the two shopping centres in Broome.

Strategic Assessment Report

- Stakeholder workshops were held around the themes of Terrestrial, Marine and Social environment with follow-up workshops on the marine environment.
- 13 December 2011 – After an extensive period of development, the SAR was released for Public comment.
- 13-24 December 2011 – Department of State Development staff member based in Broome office to liaise with stakeholders and to answer community questions.
- 24-26 February 2011 – A three day information session was recently held around the SAR where community members had the opportunity to ask questions of the specialists who conducted specific studies.
- 1-28 March 2011 – Department of State Development staff member based in Broome to respond to community questions.