

WA to press Garrett over State say in NW developments

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The State Government is sending a high-level delegation to Canberra to seek assurances from the Federal Government that development assessments for the North-West will not be hijacked by the green lobby.

Deputy Premier Eric Ripper's chief of staff Mike Megaw will lead the group that will meet Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett next week.

Pressure from the resources industry has sparked fears that proposed bilateral agreements between Perth and Canberra for the Burrup Peninsula and the

Kimberley will leave WA with less say over future development and heritage decisions. The State Government wants Canberra to vest some of its authority with WA but Mr Garrett is refusing to relinquish any powers.

He and Mr Ripper insist there is no issue between the two governments, but sources say negotiations are not running smoothly.

A bilateral agreement and management arrangement that protects the heritage values of the Pilbara's Burrup Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago while also managing the approvals process for major projects is being developed. A spokesman for Mr Ripper confirmed the meeting next week.