

Proposed new gas plant open for public scrutiny

Chalpat Sonti

Saturday, July 05, 2008

The company behind the Varanus Island gas plant where an explosion has created havoc with the state's energy supplies has put its next development out for public comment.

Apache Energy wants to build a plant at Devil Creek, about 45km south of Karratha, capable of producing up to 200 terrajoules of gas a day from the Reindeer field.

Of this, at least 100TJ would be earmarked for the Dampier-Bunbury Pipeline, which supplies the South West.

The Varanus island plant can produce about 350 TJ a day, or about one-third of the state's gas supplies.

Apache has released an environmental report on Devil Creek for public comment, as it is required to do by law. Submissions close on August 11.

There would be a 10km pipeline from where it came onshore to the processing plant, where two processing trains, capable of producing 100TJ each, would operate close together.

Much of the damage at Varanus island was believed to be because the two trains there were close together, in order to meet environmental requirements, prompting Apache boss Tim Wall to call on the state government to look at changing the law.

Meanwhile, a report into a possible LNG hub in the Kimberley has been released by Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett and WA Treasurer Eric Ripper.

It recommends nine sites for processing the massive Browse Basin gas reserves, including the Maret Islands, site of a controversial LNG proposal by Japanese company Inpex and French firm Total. Inpex has also indicated it could process the gas in Darwin.

Mr Garrett said the final processing facility would help secure the "long-term protection of the unique heritage and environmental values" of the West Kimberley.

Mr Ripper said the state government was committed to ensuring the Kimberley community would benefit from employment prospects should an on-shore location be chosen.