

Kimberley Activists ‘green-light’ FLNG for Browse

Environmentalists campaigning against Woodside’s controversial LNG plant at James Price Point will support floating LNG as a compromise solution to the beleaguered Browse project going ahead offshore.

It’s not often that green campaigners and big oil and gas business find themselves singing from the same hymn sheet. But this was the astonishing outcome following Save the Kimberley Co-Chairman Kevin Blatchford’s revelation that activists had been favourably disposed to floating LNG “from day one” and would actively encourage operator Woodside to deploy Shell’s floating LNG technology 200 km offshore at Browse, thus preventing construction of an onshore liquefaction plant 60 km north of Broome at James Price Point.

“Broome relies on tourism in a big way and that

is why we have always been against an onshore plant and will not support a big LNG facility in this area for that reason,” said Blatchford.

He claimed that Woodside had been forced into agreeing to an onshore plant at James Price Point by WA State Premier Colin Barnett and Federal Resources Minister Martin Ferguson under the veiled threat of losing retention licences.

Barnett is on record saying he will continue to lobby for the 12 MMtpa plant to be constructed onshore.

Save the Kimberley has been fervent in its campaign against an onshore LNG plant near Broome, with activists vociferously shadowing industry movement in the area and blockading start-up initiatives in protests spreading as far afield as Sydney.

Blatchford said a James Price Point plant was “now a dead horse, but there are reliable alternatives”.

He said for all the hullabaloo about indigenous people losing out on jobs if an onshore plant was scuttled, Browse’s JV partners could still provide benefits by facilitating FLNG training for local Aboriginal people.

Blatchford added that Save the Kimberley will not oppose the construction of a supply base for Browse in Broome, “subject to meeting environmental approvals”.

Woodside declined to comment on floating LNG for Browse. A spokesperson said: “We are undertaking a disciplined assurance process to determine project costs and economics to be in a position to make a final investment decision in the first half of 2013.” ■