



# Media Release

## Senator Alan Eggleston

### Liberal Senator for Western Australia

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#### Standing in the way of Indigenous development

21 December 2010

Today's recommendation by the Australian Heritage Council to include the James Price Point area as part of a national heritage listing of the West Kimberley is a regrettable blow to the proposed gas development at James Price Point as it is effectively a step away from helping local Indigenous communities lift themselves out of a cycle of abject poverty and unemployment, according to WA Senator Alan Eggleston.

As a result of a long, expensive and often misinformed campaign which is counterproductive to the interests of the Kimberley's Indigenous people, environmental activists may have succeeded in frustrating the development by having the Heritage Council reverse a previous decision which had rightly excluded the area.

"While the Australian Heritage Council certainly plays an important role in protecting areas of significance across Australia, it is hard not to suspect that in this case the Council's decision making process has been politicised due to unrelenting pressure from opponents to the James Price Point development," said Senator Eggleston.

"The James Price Point gas development is a unique opportunity to make significant inroads into the widespread social crisis within the Kimberley's Aboriginal population, with guaranteed training and employment opportunities being offered as well as over \$1 billion in benefits which will flow to Indigenous communities.

"The Kimberley Land Council supported this Woodside project because of the benefits which would flow to local Aboriginals and no doubt also because of Woodside's record on sensitively protecting the petroglyphs on the Burrup Peninsula at their Pluto project.

"My question to activists intent on stymieing this and any other development in the Kimberley is what exactly what do they propose as an alternative to assist these people in joining the modern world and ending the scandalous cycle of hopelessness which inevitably leads to alcoholism and the sad stories of physical and sexual abuse which have become public in recent years?

"We need to do away with the scare tactics being employed and objectively investigate the long term benefits this opportunity will bring to those so desperately in need," said Senator Eggleston.

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