



The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment



Chair
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

MC13-000056

06 NOV 2013

Dear Chair

I refer to your letter of 17 June 2013 to the former Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP concerning Standing Committee on Petitions calling for a public inquiry into the impacts of the proposed Browse liquefied natural gas (LNG) precinct near James Price Point, in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. I regret the delay in responding.

An agreement to undertake a strategic assessment of a common user LNG Hub in the Kimberley was jointly signed by the Western Australian and Australian governments in February 2008. Woodside Petroleum Limited (Woodside) was designated by the Western Australian Government as the 'Foundation Proponent'. On 12 April 2013 Woodside announced it was reviewing alternative LNG developments as the existing proposal did not meet the company's commercial requirements for a positive final investment decision and on 2 September 2013 the Browse Joint Venture participants selected the use of floating LNG technology as the preferred development concept to commercialise the Browse Basin resource.

On 19 August 2013 three administrative decisions made in connection with environmental approvals granted by the Western Australian Environment Protection Authority for the proposed Browse LNG precinct were determined to be unlawful and invalid. Consequently there is no state environmental approval for the Browse LNG precinct at James Price Point.

In April and May 2013 the Western Australian Government provided final documentation in accordance with the strategic assessment agreement. As this documentation does not reflect the commercial and legal developments outlined above, I will not be making any decision on the strategic assessment at this time and a public inquiry is not required.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Greg Hunt