



## **Fortescue now at Arm's length**

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### **Body**

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The number of proponents trying to shore up projects at the Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct has been reduced from five to four.

**Fortescue** Future Industries, one of five companies last year granted 12-month "Not To Deal" assurances from the Territory government to develop projects at Middle Arm, has quietly withdrawn its bid to develop a green hydrogen hub.

**Fortescue** was one of five proponents selected by the Territory government to develop projects at Middle Arm along with TEH2, Tivan, Tamboran Resources and Avenir.

But **Fortescue's** interest in Northern Territory projects has been waning since the group unsuccessfully bid for control of SunCable's Australia-Asia Powerlink, which was eventually acquired by Mike Cannon-Brookes' Grok Ventures last November.

In February former chief minister Michael Gunner stepped aside from the Andrew Forrest owned FFI after holding roles as Australia West Director and Australian director.

His resignation was one of a number of high profile departures from **Fortescue**, including former chief financial officer and Reserve Bank deputy governor Guy Debelle, who last year moved to Territory company Tivan as a director.

In a statement, the NT government said it hoped to retain **Fortescue** at Middle Arm.

"Following recent discussions with **Fortescue** on its project outlook and planning activities, the Not to Deal arrangement has concluded," a spokesman said.

"**Fortescue** continues to consider Middle Arm Sustainable Development Precinct an attractive long-term location for green product projects, and the Northern Territory government would welcome a future project by **Fortescue** in the Territory.

## Fortescue now at Arm's length

"The Northern Territory government is continually engaging with a number of potential proponents around opportunities at Middle Arm. More specifically, discussions are well advanced with two green energy projects about land in the precinct which combined are expected to require slightly more land than what was previously proposed by **Fortescue**." The government said Not to Deal commitments for initial proponents TEH2, Tivan, Tamboran and Avenira remain in place.

Middle Arm is the Territory government's most consequential major project which, if successfully developed, could deliver 20,000 direct and indirect jobs to the economy and millions in revenue and royalties. A visionary plan, Middle Arm defies the historic challenge of securing major projects by offering developers the land, infrastructure and regulatory environment of a joint user facility to get hundred-million-dollar-plus developments off the ground.

Canberra-focused anti-development activists including senators David Pocock and Lidia Thorpe have opposed the development, implying the Territory, unlike anywhere else in Australia, should be excluded from job-creating, wealth-generating projects.

While the agreements are intended to provide proponents with confidence and certainty to continue developing their proposals, the government said, final land allocation within Middle Arm is subject to key project milestones and approvals, specific to each proponent project.

The Middle Arm peninsula is already home to the Santos Darwin LNG and the INPEX Ichthys LNG processing facilities. Both companies are committed to net zero emissions. While the government attempts to secure development at Middle Arm, it's also wrestling with seemingly constant delays on its \$500m ship lift project while work continues on two other Top End major projects - the Tiger Brennan Drive overpass and the State Square art gallery.

After almost a decade, the government said it was preparing to start work at the Alice Springs Indigenous art gallery. In the private sector Tamboran Resources and Empire Energy are continuing work in the Beetaloo Basin, hoping for first production next year, Grok is developing Sun Cable and in Central Australian Arafura Rare Earths continues to progress the Nolans project, underpinned with an \$840m Commonwealth loan.

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