



Ross Contarino

Advance Cairns has for some months now been working with the Cairns Chamber of Commerce and the Queensland Government on seeking opportunities for Tropical North Queensland-based businesses in Papua New Guinea. At the beginning of this year we hired a local consulting agency to research and identify a clear path for the region's businesses to follow, and that process is producing some great insights.

We have also been very pleased with the level of assistance we have received from the State Government and most

particularly from Treasurer Andrew Fraser who has taken a personal interest in this process. The Government has now appointed two staff positions in Cairns to support the initiative - a Trade Queensland Officer, Deborah Maguire and Special Representative for PNG, Kevin Byrne. This all builds on the work the Chamber and its sub-committee, the Resource and Industrial Taskforce have been ploughing ahead with for the past four years.

A trade mission to Papua New Guinea led by the Treasurer Andrew Fraser three weeks ago provided local businesses with the perfect opportunity to explore their options for doing business with the Pacific nation. The trip has been heralded a resounding success, and there have already been reciprocal visits by PNG-based companies to deal with Cairns companies. Of course doing business with PNG is not a new initiative and many local

companies have been active in that market for decades. However, the heightened expenditure generated by the many new mining and resource projects has captured our attention.

Nineteen Cairns businesses joined the 36-strong delegation on the three-day mission to Port Moresby, and the group was warmly welcomed by PNG business and Government leaders. It was clear how significant the interest currently is in PNG as we met numerous Cairns business people who were not part of the Trade Mission, during our stay. Quite apart from the formal meetings arranged by the mission leaders Trade Queensland and Austrade, we were able to secure several one-on-one meetings with companies such as ExxonMobil, Asian Development Bank, Ok Tedi and InterOil.

In addition to the Port Moresby mission, Advance Cairns added a two-day visit

to PNG's main industrial centre, Lae, which we led in partnership with Cairns Chamber of Commerce President, Jeremy Blockey. It was quite obvious that the opportunities in Lae were very different to those demonstrated in Port Moresby, but they were no less significant. As well as meeting with the Lae Chamber of Commerce, we also met with several local businesses that showed serious interest in utilising the business linkages with the Cairns region. They are particularly interested in scoring direct flights to Cairns, which they believe will make doing business here much easier.

Our mission now is to continue to work with the Cairns Chamber, Trade Queensland and the Special Representative for PNG on a range of activities that will strengthen this working relationship with our near neighbours including plans for additional trade missions later this year.

## Matching Marine Services

A local consultant with more than 30 years of marine industry experience has been engaged to investigate business matching opportunities for the Far North's marine sector.

Phil Simpson of Simpson Marine has been appointed to undertake the first element of the \$90,000 Marine Services Business Matching Project, being delivered by Advance Cairns, which will involve market research to identify specific marine refit/maintenance opportunities and synergies for local companies.

A steering committee of representatives of local marine service providers, the State Government and Advance Cairns will oversee the project, which aims to mitigate the impact of



the economic downturn in the marine services sector by establishing and building relationships with key national and international customers and stakeholders, and identify opportunities to be matched to regional capabilities.

## Hospital Redevelopment on Track



Advance Cairns CEO Ross Contarino, who sits on the Hospital Redevelopment Advisory Board, joined a tour of the Queensland Health Cairns Base Hospital construction sites last month.

The tour took in the new Northern Health Centre on Sheridan Street, the new car park and Oncology Centre on Lake Street and the expansion of the Emergency Ward

being built on the Esplanade.

Mr Contarino said the projects are all in full swing and providing valuable opportunities for the region's skilled tradesmen. "I was quite impressed with the innovative design being utilised on the Northern Health Centre, which should be a boost for both patients and staff members alike," he said.

## Partnering with PNG Forum

Businesses looking to export their services and expertise into Papua New Guinea will learn more about the process at a forum in Cairns this month.

The 'Partnering with PNG' forum, co-hosted by Advance Cairns and Cairns Chamber of Commerce, will feature a panel session and key guest presenters offering extensive and

current business experience working with, and in PNG.

DATE: Wednesday, April 21

TIME: 3.00pm - 6.00pm

VENUE: Shangri-la Hotel Ballroom

RSVP: Via Cairns Chamber of Commerce website:

[www.cairnschamber.com.au](http://www.cairnschamber.com.au)

## On Brand

A regional brand designed to market the Tropical North as an exotic food destination is in the works following input from the region's food industry stakeholders.

A series of branding workshops held in Mossman, Cairns, Walkamin and South Johnstone last month produced united enthusiasm for a holistic brand for the region's food industry.

Peter Singline, a recognised branding

consultant from Melbourne who has been engaged to research, develop and implement the branding strategy, led the workshops and was encouraged by the stakeholders' realisation of the worth of a regional brand.

Mr Singline will return to the Tropical North later this month to present a story that will represent the brand, which will dovetail into the region's tourism branding.

## Thinking TNQ

More than 360 web-watchers from across the globe logged onto the Think TNQ website following its launch late last month.

The regional web portal, designed to promote the liveability of Tropical North Queensland and investment opportunities in the region, has attracted visitors from Cairns to the United States of America and Papua New Guinea since its official launch at the Shangri-La Hotel in Cairns last month.

The most hits came from within Australia with Brisbane residents leading the charge, followed by significant interest from visitors in Sydney, Cairns and Melbourne.

[www.thinktnq.com.au](http://www.thinktnq.com.au) demonstrates the cumulative strengths and advantages of the TNQ region setting it apart from other regions in Queensland, with the objective to promote the potential for diverse and sustainable economic development to any prospective investor, business owner or resident.

