



Ross Contarino

Late last month we had a visit from the Kelly, Fox, Costa travelling taskforce (comprising Bill Kelly, Lindsay Fox and Frank Costa) as part of the Keep Australia Working program, ably led locally by Peter Dautre. More than 130 local business people attended the early-morning event to listen to the message that the trio brought to our region.

The Travelling Taskforce

Australian trade unionist Bill Kelly spoke about the many battles he has had with Government over workers' rights, and the fact that he never gave up until he had achieved the desired result. Trucking magnate Lindsay Fox told his rags to riches story and outlined the importance of not leaving parts of the community behind, while entrepreneur Frank Costa spoke about the revitalisation of Geelong following the Pyramid Building Society collapse in the town more than 20 years ago.

The essence of their message was three-fold, and reinforced the need to gather together local leadership; select the right message to deliver to the decision

makers; and don't take no for an answer. Listening to the delivery by these heavy hitters from both sides of politics brought the realisation that the work we did for the New Deal initiative wasn't far from that mark.

Bill Kelly was adamant that we must not accept the plight that we are enduring with record unemployment, and we must continue to bang the drum at the decision makers. He encouraged us to continue banging on the politician's doors until we could see some strong changes in our situation.

The New Deal consortium will heed his advice and continue to push for measures

that will improve our economy. The Cairns region has an entrepreneurial, never-say-die attitude typified by a multitude of successful small business operators. With some assistance, they will be able to turn our economy around and it is up to us and our elected officials to find a path through the current downturn.

Advance Cairns and our New Deal partners have been working hard to find new opportunities for our local industries, whether that be new tourism markets and niche opportunities, through to new segments for our educational and mining services providers. We will take Bill Kelly's advice and continue to look under every rock and bang on every door.

Bridge to China Forum

Trade Queensland, Advance Cairns and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council are joining forces to bring the first Bridge to China forum to Cairns, next month.

Learn first-hand about market opportunities for goods and services in Hong Kong and Southern China, as well as information on the forthcoming China International Small to Medium Enterprise Fair (CISMEF) in Guangzhou (15-18 September 2010). The forum will feature a presentation on the following topics:

- Hong Kong – gateway into Southern China
- Guangdong market overview – one of the preferred destinations for investment and trade in Southern China

- Updates on CISMEF, Queensland's participation and how you can participate

- Food and agribusiness
- Education and training.

Cairns Mayor Val Schier will open the forum, while Bonnie Shek, Director of Australia and New Zealand, Hong Kong Trade Development Council, will be the keynote speaker presenting on trade and investment opportunities in Hong Kong and Southern China, **Date:** Tuesday 1 June 2010 **Time:** 8.45 am for 9.00 am start – 12.00 pm **Venue:** Shangri-La Marina Hotel Cost: No charge (light refreshments included) **Please RSVP to:** Michelle Jago via email sao@advancecairns.com or on 07 4080 2900 by Monday, May 24

The Future of Organics

An organics abattoir for the Tablelands was one of the outcomes of a feasibility study of the region's organics industry to be launched this month.

The study, produced by local consultant Bob Cobavie and commissioned by Advance Cairns through its Food Industry project, looks into the future opportunities for organics and other alternative agricultural methods of farming in on the Tablelands.

Stakeholder input helped determine where the regions' organics sector is currently placed and what future organic opportunities there are for the region. An organics abattoir placed high on the priority list, followed by assistance for the organics dairy industry, and the establishment of an organic produce market in Atherton.

The full findings of the study will be released at a launch event on the Tablelands later this month.

A Regional Food Identity

The creative process to brand the Tropical North as an exotic food destination will begin this month.

A regional brand has been identified, following consultation with industry stakeholders earlier this year, and will be translated into a logo and tag line before being officially launched to the public later in the year.

The branding, currently being kept under wraps, is being developed by Peter Singline, a recognised branding consultant from Melbourne, will have its first showing in a pre-launch showing at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) in Adelaide next month.



Welcome to the Board

Advance Cairns has welcomed two new directors to its board. Cassowary Coast Regional Council Mayor Bill Shannon (pictured right) was officially appointed as a director last month, along with Business Consultant and Director of Fortis One, Graham Caldwell who joins the board as an independent director. Cr Shannon and Mr Caldwell help to fill the seats of departed independent director Clive Abbott, Principal of Betta Real Estate, and soon-to-retire director Clive Skarrott, current Chairman of Ports North.



Business Sustainability Summit

Sustainable TNQ, an initiative of Advance Cairns, and the Queensland Government have partnered to bring a Business Sustainability Summit to Cairns this week.

The full-day event will provide information on how Far North Queensland businesses incorporate sustainability and good environmental practices that will reduce the cost of energy to their business.

The summit will show case energy saving technologies, local case studies, tested

sustainable solutions, trade displays on today's most innovative, best practice sustainable technologies and services, and interactive workshops. Sustainable TNQ will host the 'Don't be left in the dark' workshop, facilitated by Ross Wyatt, General Manager of the Net Balance Foundation, and a motivational presentation by polar explorer and environmental leader, Robert Swan.

The event will be held at the Shangri-La Hotel Boardroom on Friday, May 7 from 8:30am to 4pm.

Linkages with PNG

The findings of a strategy designed to strengthen links with Papua New Guinea will be presented at a briefing session next week.

The Strategic Connection with PNG Business project, enacted by Advance Cairns and carried out by Blockey Consulting, was developed in response to the rapid growth in the mining industry in PNG and the opportunities they present for North Queensland businesses and service providers.

Consultant Jeremy Blockey will present the findings of the strategy and identify clear opportunities for the region's businesses to

do business with the Pacific nation.

Date: Wednesday, May 12

Location: The Queenslander Restaurant, Cairns TAFE

Time: 10:45am for 11am start, Followed by lunch at 12pm in the TAFE restaurant

Cost: \$37.50 (inclusive of GST)

RSVP: Refer to the Events section of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce website: www.cairnschamber.com.au