



Local business can benefit from major project plans

\$80b opportunity

By **TONY RAGGATT**

NORTH Queensland is awash with \$80 billion worth of major projects and our businesses need to latch on to them, according to development body Townsville Enterprise.

The group has sourced a list of major projects from the Queensland Government's Heavy Engineering Directory.

While about \$50 billion worth of projects are still on the drawing board and not definite goers for another three to five years, it says \$30 billion worth are either committed or under construction.

Townsville Enterprise economic development general manager Dr Lisa McDonald said North Queensland businesses had every reason to maintain a sense of optimism despite the global economic crisis.

She said she was positive about the economic future of North Queensland and wanted to encourage business owners to look beyond their normal sources of contracts to ensure the region's continued growth.

"North Queensland is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the major projects announced for the wider region from Mackay west to Mount Isa and north to Cairns," she said.

"There are a wide variety of major projects committed, in planning and under construction that offer North Queensland companies opportunities to tender for work. These opportunities will continue to be lost to companies outside of the region unless local businesses think innovatively about ways to build their capacity and capabilities to take on these larger projects."

North Queensland businesses are being encouraged to build working relationships with their local competition to take advantage of the projects.

Townsville Enterprise provided a list of 23 projects valued at \$500 million or more proposed for the region.

All together the projects were valued at \$26 billion.

Bowen's Abbot Point topped the list of projects in terms of worth with coal export facilities and alumina processing proposals valued at more than \$8 billion.

Three of the projects were residential developments at Townsville each valued at \$1 billion.

Many of the projects related to the development or expansion of coal mines.

Dr McDonald said the developments would generate a variety of contracts that could sustain North

Queensland engineering and other related businesses through difficult economic times.

She said Townsville Enterprise would be working with the proponents of selected major projects to identify supply chain gaps.

This information would be supplied to North Queensland businesses so they might supply goods and services that would otherwise be sourced from outside of the region.

Townsville Chamber of Commerce president Craig Stack supported the work to identify supply chain gaps and to work with industry to build their capacity and capabilities to keep the business in North Queensland.

"The opportunity for clusters across various sectors to win work with these large projects looms large," he said.

"The engineering sector, civil contracting, construction and fabrication industries can each develop work flow over several years by linking with these projects."

To see the Queensland Government's heavy engineering directory go to www.heirg.com.

Turn to Pages 84-85
for the full list of projects





Sonoma coal en route to Abbot Point for export