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## our say

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## Mission good for our future

**T**HE announcement of a state trade mission to Papua New Guinea led by Treasurer Andrew Fraser will be welcomed by the Cairns business community.

Of course, Mr Fraser will be representing the whole state and not just the Far North, but he has acknowledged a significant Cairns influence on the venture.

"This trade mission will have a heavy focus on positioning Cairns as a business hub to support Papua New Guinea's major projects and its projected growth in coming years," he said.

"PNG is experiencing strong growth in education and training, liquefied natural gas and mining services, building and construction, agribusiness, international development and tropical expertise sectors."

Mr Fraser is also aware of the unique economic conditions facing Cairns and region and the need for new trade

partners to help break the volatile "boom and bust" cycle.

These conditions have been particularly exposed in the past 12 months by the global financial crisis and the significant downturn in the tourism sector.

The potential for trade links with PNG is now greater than ever with the announcement of two \$19 billion liquefied natural gas projects for that nation.

With our similar climate and related skills, it stands to reason that our PNG friends would look to this region for help.

Moreover, Australian businesses are subject to far greater public scrutiny than competitors in China, another nation that has shown an interest in our northern neighbour's resources.

For this reason, many people in PNG should be more likely to look favourably on investment from this region.