



PNG link key to our future

David Sexton

sextond@tcpnews.com.au

POSITIONING Cairns as a business link with Papua New Guinea will be a priority for a trade mission to that country led by Treasurer Andrew Fraser.

Mr Fraser said the Cairns business community would have "a strong presence" in the delegation, set to start on March 15, with representatives of five Far Northern organisations confirmed and others nominated to take part.

The Treasurer made the comments while talking to business leaders as part of the Government's Community Cabinet yesterday at Innisfail.

"Papua New Guinea is on the verge of a resources boom, and Cairns needs to put itself front and centre in the race to attract the investment that will bring," Mr Fraser said.

"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.

"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 said Queensland skills, as well as the state's proximity, meant it would be invaluable in helping PNG manage growth.

"Opportunities for international development business contracts for Far North Queensland companies continue to emerge across PNG, and improving relationships by way of this trip will only enhance these prospects," Mr Fraser said.

"While in Port Moresby I will meet with the Australian High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea and the central bank governor, as well as key investment



Andrew Fraser

bodies such as PNG Superfund and the PNG Sustainable Development Fund.

"Meetings have also been scheduled with ExxonMobil, Air Nugini and Fern Software to discuss key PNG business projects, and engagements with other key industry stakeholders are also expected to eventuate."

Mr Fraser said Cairns was a logical business gateway for partnerships and trade to PNG.

"The Far North Queensland economy is an export economy, and the Government is committed to building stronger personal relationships with the Governments and business communities of PNG to achieve this success," he said.

"With two major LNG projects worth a projected total of \$30 billion on PNG's horizon and Far North Queensland companies already equipped to contribute to upcoming AusAID and Asian Development Bank PNG projects, the potential for local job creation and economic growth is substantial."

■ Our Say - Page 12