

North targets US marines

BUSINESS operators wanting to tap into the \$12 billion military build-up in Guam need to act now, the leader of a sales mission to the island territory next month says.

TropLinks chief executive officer Graham Poon said there was an opportunity to reap tens of millions of dollars by offering sub-contractor and specialised services to the major US companies building the multi-billion dollar infrastructure.

But, he said, the business community needed to develop relationships now before the work starts.

Mr Poon said the US will transfer 8000 marines from its Okinawa

NICK DALTON

BUSINESS EDITOR

daltonn@tcp.newsltd.com.au



base in Japan, plus their families (totalling at least 25,000 people), over the next five to seven years.

Other defence moves include an aircraft carrier, a submarine and anti-ballistic squadrons.

"Numerous business opportunities are arising from the direct effects of the military build-up, as well as the need to upgrade the civilian infrastructure," he said.

Mr Poon said Cairns was poised to take advantage of the many opportunities but it was vital to start building relationships with the Guam business community.

He said the major contracts would go to US companies but they would require many of the goods, services and sub-contracting abilities of the Far North, including hospitality and tourism, engineering and technical services, education and training, construction, energy services and green building and design.

Mr Poon said Tourism Tropical North Queensland would aim to lure

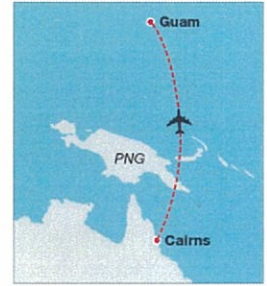
marines wanting rest and recreation as Cairns was a military-approved holiday destination.

He said the Far North was in a good position with the only direct flight from Australia to Guam (4.5 hours), similar weather and environment, business culture, time zone and the English language.

"They love doing business with Australians. They like us because we are straight-talking, friendly and we treat them as equals."

The trip is from April 11-14. Registrations close March 18. Go to www.troplinks.com

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And another thing...

THE Far North is in an ideal situation to tap into the multi-billion dollar military build-up in Guam. The US island territory is just 4.5 hours by air from Cairns, the only direct service in Australia. We have a wealth of tropical expertise for the huge amount of infrastructure required, including military housing, roads and other works.

Published and printed by *The Cairns Post* Pty Ltd. A.B.N. 79 009 655 752 of 22-24 Abbott St, Cairns. ISSN Number 1322-8587. Responsibility for election comment appearing in *The Cairns Post* is taken by Andrew Holman, 22-24 Abbott St, Cairns.