

Guam offers business expansion opportunities

TOWNSVILLE business people looking to expand their horizons and their business are being invited to join a trade mission to Guam.

A Cairns-based group which aims to grow Australia's tropical economy, TropLinks, is planning a mission to the Micronesian United States territory from April 11 to 14 and held seminars in Townsville and Cairns this week to encourage companies to participate.

TropLinks CEO Graham Poon, a former Townsville businessman who worked with tourism entrepreneur the late Doug Tarca, said the territory was facing an unprecedented growth phase over the next five to seven years because of the relocation of major military assets from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam.

He said the island's population was predicted to grow from 175,000 to 200,000 with total investment in military and civilian infrastructure of around \$20 billion.

Mr Poon said the group saw the main opportunities for North Queensland businesses in sub-contracting to major US companies or working with Guam businesses to supply goods and services. So far companies from banking, to energy and ice-creams had been successful in entering the Guam market.

The Australia and New Zealand Banking Group has entered the territory about two years ago by buying a local financier Citizen Security for around \$30 million.

A premier Australian ice-cream manufacturer had recently entered the market, selling more than \$1 million worth of ice-creams in Micronesia, mostly in Guam, in the first year.

Other companies were looking at providing renewable energy and waste water systems.

"The requirements for power and wastewater is huge," Mr Poon said.

"All of the opportunities are not just in military (requirements). There is need for civilian infrastructure upgrading roads and power systems."