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myview

with Margaret Darveniza



Marketing tropical minds

Snapshot much the same

THE Cairns Regional Council has produced its glossy and colourful Cairns 2011 economic snapshot. But on close inspection, apart from different images, colours and designs, it reads much like last year's. The words are almost the same, as are most of the statistics and graphs. The only changes are the latest unemployment rate, housing affordability and airport passenger numbers. Apart from that it's a case of spot the difference. Seems a gross waste of money and time. Check them out http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/8579/2010EconomicSnapshot.pdf and http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/19149/Economic-Snapshot-Jan2011.pdf

C'est Bon fits the bill

FRENCH restaurant C'est Bon has joined the Super Yacht Group. Now what has a French restaurant got to do with super yachts? Owner Junelle McNaught said she and partner George Karst had been associated with the marine industry for many years. "I owned and operated Tawny's seafood restaurant for over 20 years. Tawny's was the favourite venue for members of the marine and fishing industry to dine and entertain their guests. As such I was personally able to meet the movers and shakers of the marine industry. On the other hand George had it much easier, as he just spent 20 years motoring around the world with *Marco Polo 1* and *Marco Polo 11*. As they say birds of a feather flock together ... We believe C'est Bon fills the bill."

Fascinating opportunity

PHOTOGRAPHER Jake Nowakowski is still searching for men to pose with fascinators for a new socio-photographic project, Man vs Fascinator. Jake has been commissioned to undertake the exhibition project created to coincide with the pomp, ceremony and elaborate headdresses donned by ladies at this year's spring racing carnival, Cairns Amateurs. Opportunities to become a Man vs Fascinator subject will be scheduled between now and July. To get involved contact Cairns Festival on 40443086. To learn more email e.holowacz@ Cairns.qld.gov.au or stop by Cairns Festival HQ in City Place.

Restaurant impresses Bligh

PREMIER Anna Bligh hosted a special tourism leaders function at Beach Almond Restaurant at Palm Cove while she spent almost a week running the affairs of state from Cairns. Member for Barron River Steve Wettenhall and representatives from Tourism Queensland selected the Beach Almond for its innovative menu and classic tropical style to represent the essence of Palm Cove. Apparently Ms Bligh was chuffed by the venue. "We have had a wonderful night. You (Brian and Sarah Holding) have been great hosts and the food was absolutely brilliant."

AS debate rages in Federal Parliament over the proposed carbon tax, it's a good time to open up a discussion about the best ways for our region to adapt to a low-carbon future.

Macro and micro changes will take place. These might include mandatory solar power for all new houses, a reinvigorated public transport system, retrofitting our plumbing to better use grey water or the take-up of hybrid vehicles.

While we don't really know what's down the track, what's not in doubt is that we are undergoing a clean industrial revolution and the repercussions of that will be felt, for better or worse, across our regional economy.

This, of course, begs the question: what does Far North Queensland need to do, to not only survive, but thrive when reality starts to bite?

Federal Parliament is grappling with these issues as I write and it's an understatement to say there are no easy answers.

As we move from a high-consumption, high-carbon economy to something approaching the opposite, we need to rethink and reframe what we do well.

One possible solution (and there will be as many solutions as there are challenges) lies in a concept known as the economy of ideas.

The economy of ideas covers everything from educational and research institutions



to advisers, consultants and specialists.

It is about experience and expertise: the ability to market your mind.

And, this, to borrow a phrase, is where Far North Queensland shines.

We are home to a wealth of tropical experts and specialists working across every major economic sector in one of the most extreme and demanding environments on earth.

The tropical expertise sector is characterised by skills, systems, services, solutions, products and research developed in the tropics. It is growing, vibrant, viable and in demand.

Advance Cairns recognised the need to consolidate the vast number of people in our region who are quietly achieving great things in the tropical expertise sector.

This consolidation became Austropex.

Austropex, the name is a conjunction of the words Australian Tropical Expertise, brings our tropical specialists together under one banner and across 10 industry groups including mining, health, education

and training, environment, built environment, energy, agriculture, food, aviation and marine.

Austropex.com offers tropical experts a platform from which to market themselves, promotes the collective strength of this sector to the world, connects and supports the discrete industry groups and is home to relevant news, events and business and work opportunities.

Most importantly, though, Austropex brands the Far North as the home of tropical expertise and front and centre of the ideas economy.

Whether someone from the Philippines needs a specialist to build flood-proof housing, revegetate denuded land or prevent mosquito-borne diseases, they can find them on Austropex.

If a Pacific Island needs a sustainability plan for its fisheries or a climate mitigation strategy, they know where to look.

If the government needs a report on the viability of wind-farming on Cape York or how to stop disease moving from PNG to the Torres Strait, Austropex members can assist.

Knowledge has always been valuable currency.

By consolidating our knowledge in a site such as Austropex we can position ourselves as leaders in the new economy.

► Margaret Darveniza is the acting chief executive officer of Advance Cairns.

Innovation may hold the keys to success

LOCATION, location, location is the catch cry of real estate agents.

But as the Far North business community seeks ways to diversify, the mantra perhaps should be innovation, innovation, innovation.

There are many same-too businesses in the region from restaurants and jewellers to tour companies and hair salons.

They all serve their purpose but sometimes you wonder how they all survive with too much competition and only so many customers, whether they are tourists or locals.

It takes a special person to break the mould and think out-

Briefcase

BUSINESS WEEK SAYS

side the square. The latest entrepreneur is Dannis Prowse who is working with glass company Glasstech to create glass paintings.

It hasn't been an easy task for the 49-year-old who has sold a business to invest \$40,000 in the past year developing the process to laminate fragile glass art pieces to toughened glass to create feature windows, shower screens and office partitions.

The first prototypes have been produced and now begins a marketing campaign to sell the niche products.

Ms Prowse, who divides her time between Cairns and Stradbroke Island where she lives with her partner, first attended a course run by a German expert to learn how to laminate the lighter glass pieces to the stronger sheets to meet Australian safety codes.

Then she thought it would be a simple task for the million dollar water jet cutter at Glasstech to cut the art pieces from templates.

However, it wasn't as she had to get her Illustrator files to

"talk to" the Autocad and water jet files so the cutter would correctly cut the pieces to be bonded.

It was a case of trial and error and she nearly gave up.

But her persistence has paid off and she has created three designs: a rainforest scene, bubbles and waves to make shower screens, glass partitions and even windows far more interesting and without the traditional lead lights with their lead lines.

Ms Prowse says the product has a lot of potential, even creating special windows in skyscrapers as well as making the shower screen a highlight of the bathroom.



TASTEBUDS...

The Cairns Post feature for Food Lovers & Creative Chefs

Cooking classes, local produce, decadent desserts or delightful deli's - anything from the paddock to the pantry to the dinner party would be great promoted in this full colour feature.

PUBLICATION DATE IS Saturday 19/03/11 in Weekender lifestyle liftout.

For pricing & editorial opportunities please CALL JAYNE MARTIN 4052 6660 or email for trade at martinj@tcp.newsltd.com.au

Help promote our region as the Food Lover's Paradise that it is!

