

NEW JEWEL IN DARWIN'S CROWN



Chief Minister Paul Henderson and General Manager of the Darwin Convention Centre Malu Barrios at the opening of the Convention Centre.

CHIEF MINISTER PAUL HENDERSON has encouraged Territorians to be ambassadors for the new jewel in the Territory's crown as he officially opened the Darwin Convention Centre.

"With 4000 square metres of exhibition space, a 1500 seat plenary hall, waterfront function rooms and 12 meeting rooms the Convention Centre really is the new jewel in Darwin's crown," Mr Henderson said.

"Eleven-thousand delegates have already booked to attend 23 conferences and exhibitions at the centre in the next year – 11 000 extra visitors to Darwin delivering an additional 76 000 visitor nights and injecting a minimum \$880 000 into our economy.

"It was built by Territorians on budget and ahead of schedule, with more than \$90 million or 95 per cent of the contracts going to local businesses.

"More than 180 jobs will be created at the Convention Centre, opening up new opportunities for Territorians in the hospitality industry.

Small business and the tourism industry will benefit from the ongoing opportunities delivered by events at the centre," said Mr Henderson.

Building the Territory's workforce

MORE THAN 9000 TERRITORIANS have started an apprenticeship or traineeship in the last three years as part of the NT Government's campaign to build the Territory's workforce, Chief Minister Paul Henderson announced today.

Meeting Greg Ambrose-Pearce from Kerry's Automotive Group which employs more than 30 apprentices and trainees across its business, Mr Henderson said the Government was well on track to meeting its target of 10 000 traineeship and apprenticeship commencements over four years.

"The Territory has the fastest growing economy in the country, and one of the biggest challenges for businesses is finding skilled staff to take advantage of the opportunities on offer," Mr Henderson said.

"5800 new jobs have been created in the Territory in the last year, and it is important we build a skilled workforce to grow our economy into the future.

Since 2005, 9298 Territorians have started an apprenticeship or traineeship, with the most popular fields including carpentry, plumbing, hospitality, children's services and automotive mechanical and engineering.

Local company wins gas contract

LOCALLY OWNED and operated company Territory Instruments has been awarded a contract for the electrical and instrumentation work on the Bonaparte Gas Pipeline.

The contract involves all electrical and instrumentation work associated with the Wadeye inlet station, the three scraper stations and Ban Ban Springs metering station.

Once the project is completed it will deliver gas to the Power and Water Corporation for power generation.

Formed in 2000, Territory Instruments is an electrical, instrument and process control engineering company. Their office in Winnellie facilitates sales and services throughout the entire NT region and operations in the Timor Sea.

Attracting more skilled workers

DEBORAH FRACARO from Airducter, a well-known Territory mechanical services company, is a local business that has recruited skilled staff from overseas.

Airducter currently employs four people under the 457 visa scheme - three sheet metal workers from the Philippines, and one industrial electrician from Zambia, southern Africa.

"After trying to recruit locally and nationally, we decided to give the 457 visa scheme a go and we're thrilled with the results," she said.

"The Government's skilled migration unit was really helpful in getting the workers here and we haven't looked back."

The Minister for Business and Economic Development, Kon Vatskalis, said Airducter's experience highlights the value of skilled migration in helping build the Territory's workforce.