

Sector worth 20% of state economy

# Resources on way back up

**NICK DALTON**

THE resources sector is worth \$767 million to the Far North region's economy – a 1.6 per cent boost despite a massive \$12.8 billion slump statewide.

New projects at Mt Garnet and a boost in Rio Tinto's production at Weipa have contributed to the \$12 million rise.

Overall resources was worth \$64.8 billion to Queensland – down from \$77.6 billion last year due to a downturn mainly in central Queensland coal mines.

According to the Queensland Resources Council's sixth annual economic contribution report released by QRC chief executive Michael Roche, there are 1846 full-time mining employees in the Far North region with a further 4139 indirect jobs for a total of 5985.

He said analysis by economics experts Lawrence Consulting showed the resources sector was responsible directly and indirectly for one in every \$5 in the state's economy and one in every six jobs.

"Despite the slump in commodity prices and the 'disrupt and delay' tactics of activist groups, it's heartening to see that a region like the Far North can still have a significant portion of its workforce employed either directly or indirectly by the resources sector," Mr Roche said.

He said the \$767 million spent in the Far North region represented five per cent of its gross regional product.

"What this means for the people of Far North is \$177 million was paid in wages to 1846 full-time employees, with more than 4000 indirect jobs also supported by resources, while \$256 million was spent locally on goods and services and local taxes and charges," he said.

"This spending benefited 2355 local businesses while resources companies made contributions to 33 community organisations in the Far North.

"Resources companies operating in the Far North also contributed about \$60 million in royalties to the state govern-

ment out of a Queensland total of \$2.1 billion, which was spent on ... schools, roads and hospitals for the benefit of all Queenslanders."

Mr Roche said all of these contributions were achieved by disturbing only 0.1 per cent of the Far North's land mass.

Economist Bill Cummings said mining bottomed in the region in 2012-13.

"Our latest figures are back up and rising again as Consolidated Tin ramped up production again at Mt Garnet and Weipa's production continues to expand from historic levels about a decade ago of 11 million tonnes to reach 26 million tonnes this year," he said in his Cairns' economy report.

"South of Embley project looks like starting soon with an estimated 950 construction jobs. "Cairns remains a major source of fly-in/fly-out and corporate services to mining ... although closure of Century Mine in the Gulf region will lead to some loss, hopefully replaced by South of Embley."

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