

INSIDE: Get the kids ready with our five-page Back to School feature – From Page 21

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**TREKKIE BEAMS
DOWN TO COURT**
CBD FIGHTER IN TROUBLE P7

**WHERE'S THE
PLAYGROUND?**
GRASS TAKES OVER PARK P3

OUR \$46B RECIPE TO CREATE JOBS

INGREDIENTS:

Mackay companies, industry groups, community and workers.

METHOD:

Mix firms with vision for \$46 billion worth of projects with a positive attitude. Add 15,000 workers. Bring to the boil.

By **KATE BASTABLE**
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BOOM Two is expected to boost Queensland's coal exports by 42 per cent by 2015, creating another 15,000 jobs in the Mackay-Whitsunday region.

Regional Economic Development Corporation economic development officer

Laura Sorensen said 33 of the state's 55 mining projects were in this region.

These are expected to create 15,000 jobs within five years and have the potential to generate another 30,000 job opportunities in other industries.

REDC's Regional Development Register for the

November quarter, released yesterday, shows \$46b in projects are planned or under construction in the region. About \$30.6b of these are under study.

REDC chief executive officer Narelle Pearse said this was good news, indicating investors were

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Southern Cross Marine Supplies, which provides coal ships with consumables, is one of many set to benefit from Boom Two. Ronell Potgieter, who recently began work at the business, was busy checking supplies yesterday.

PHOTO: PETER HOLT 120110/184

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\$1m helps farmers to do their bit to save marine park



The Coca-Cola Foundation has provided almost \$1 million for a project to reduce the impact of sugar cane farming on the Great Barrier Reef. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Coca-Cola adds life to city's reef project

By **KATE BASTABLE**
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COCA-COLA has poured a million dollar sweetener into a project to reduce the impact of sugar cane farming on the Great Barrier Reef and other waterways.

Reef Catchments land and water operations manager Will Higham said The Great Barrier Reef Freshwater Revitalisation Project, which began last year, had cleaned up an estimated 24,000 megalitres of water, which was running off 19 farms.

"This is three times the size of Dumbleton Weir," Mr Higham said.

The Reef Catchments

initiative, one of the largest funded by The Coca-Cola Foundation outside a developing country, had helped Mackay cane farmers to implement new ideas, Mr Higham said.

As well as improving water quality, the project focuses on soil health, farm production efficiency and precision planning.

Some growers were trying out new rotational crops, some were experimenting with cane harvesters and others were working to improve irrigation management, Mr Higham said.

"We're specifically working with 19 cane farmers who have been chosen be-

cause they're cutting edge or innovative. By having an agronomist who can work with the growers, the growers are better able to implement their ideas."

Mr Higham said a communication plan had been developed to share the findings with growers around the world.

The Coca-Cola Foundation had a few reasons to support the Mackay-based project, he said.

"Sugar is a major ingredient in Coca-Cola products, so it had a direct link to the supply chain for Coca-Cola."

Coca-Cola's chief executive officer had signed a water neutrality initiative,



Farmer Tony Bugeja, left, and Will Higham, of Reef Catchments, discuss the project's success. PHOTO: 120110

and the Great Barrier Reef was recognised as one of the most biologically diverse global environmental icons, Mr Higham said.

Reef Catchments is hoping to gain further funding from foundation so it can extend the project to growers in other areas.

A recipe to create 15,000 new jobs

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willing to spend money in the area.

"New projects are continuously being added to the register and with such a high number of projects under study, the region will continue to prosper," Ms Pearse said.

"Our economy is now preparing for Boom Two, which is when we will see a major boost to the Queensland economy.

"The Western Australian economy is growing rapidly as a result of mining-related construction and investment, and we will continue to see the same pattern locally for many years to come, ensuring that we are resilient to the ever-changing economic conditions around the nation."

Adecco Mackay branch manager Tanya Takagaki said the employment agency was receiving more enquiries from companies planning to increase staff numbers.

"Clients are putting their feelers out to see what we can supply because they've got projects that may fall in late March or early April," Ms Takagaki said.

Ms Sorensen said Mackay's unemployment rate rose to 4.4 per cent in March, 0.9 per cent lower than the state average. The quarterly unemployment rate for the Isaac region had been recorded at less than one per cent seven out of nine times since December 2005, she said.

National job advertisements rose by the biggest margin in more than two years last month, jumping six per cent, according to an ANZ report released on Monday. The news may add to the pressure for the Reserve Bank board to raise official interest rates next month.

Official employment data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics is due to be released tomorrow.