

MEDIA RELEASE

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Funding boost for METS SME Export Hub for the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region.

The development of the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday Mining Equipment Technical Services (METS) Export Hub will move forward after securing \$353k grant funding from the Australian Government for the establishment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Export Hubs.

The SME Export Hub funding from the Australian Government provided grants from \$150,000 to \$1.5 million to help establish and/or operate Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Export Hubs in the six Australian Government Growth Centre sectors. The export hubs will work with the Australian Government Growth Centres to facilitate SME export opportunities.

The Local Buying Foundation and Queensland Government have also provided the matched funding of \$353k funding with a total investment of \$706,840 for a two-stage project development over the next three years.

The application for funding was lodged through the Resource Industry Network International Trade Committee, made up of Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3), Resources Industry Network (RIN), Regional Development Australia Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (RDA MIW), Trade and Investment Queensland and Mackay Regional Council.

Stage 1 of the project is a regional export and international target market analysis. The analysis will incorporate SME participant identification and capability mapping. The analysis will inform the development of an export strategy for the MIW METS sector.

Stage 2 will be the engagement of a MIW METS Export Hub manager that will drive the implementation of the export strategy and provide professional support and direction to the METS Export Hub participants. A qualified consultant will then be engaged to undertake the market analysis and mapping as well as develop the export strategy. During this stage (6 to 9 months) recruitment for a MIW SME export manager will take place.

RIN General Manager Adrienne Rourke said The Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday Region has had an informal METS and advanced manufacturing export-focused consortia since 2003 through the Resource Industry Network International Trade Committee. The Committee intends to leverage the funding and establish a more formal export hub with a dedicated resource to drive the delivery of export focussed opportunities.

“MIW METS Export Hub will be incorporated into the new MIW Resources Centre of Excellence that has secured funding from the Queensland Government and Mackay Regional Council.

“The innovation, training and development facility is currently in the final detailed design process and looking to commence construction in 2019. The facility will be managed by Resource Industry Network and the SME Export Manager would be a critical function of the Resources Centre of Excellence”.

Member for Dawson George Christensen welcomed the investment into the region’s leading METS sector.

“This is a fantastic boost for our world class Mining Equipment Technology and Services sector and it will not only increase our opportunities for export, it will create jobs into the future for our region,” Mr Christensen said.

“I congratulate all those involved in this export hub for their vision and hard work to put us on the map as leaders in this field.”

The export hub will be based in Mackay, but will service opportunities across the entire Bowen, Galilee and Surat Basin resources sectors.

The aims of establishing and MIW METS SME Export Hub include:

- Development and implementation of a targeted Export Strategy for the MIW METS Sector
- Dedicated resource to foster and drive export focused activities
- Acceleration and commercialisation of export pathways
- Identification of a wider ecosystem of potential participants
- Greater access to export specific training, market intelligence and financial support
- Establish the MIW METS brand as innovative, responsive and globally competitive
- Current and Future International Market analysis
- Better informed, educated and trained METS SME stakeholders in the export function and markets
- Establish the MIW METS Sector as a centre for world’s best practice in global resource supply chains.

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