

BMA Boosts Opportunities for Businesses in Mackay

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Small businesses in the Mackay region will have unprecedented access to bid for work at BMA's Hay Point Coal Terminal, as the successful Local Buying Program opens its doors to the region on 1 December.

Established in 2012, the BMA Local Buying Program commenced as a collaborative partnership between BMA and the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDC), and is the first of its kind in the region. BHP Billiton Mitsui Coal (BMC) joined the Program in 2013.

To date, over 391 local businesses across Blackwater, Dysart, Emerald, Nebo, Moranbah and Capella communities have benefitted from the opportunity to supply goods and services to BMA and BMC operations in the Bowen Basin.

BMA Asset President, Lucas Dow, said the introduction of the Program at the Hay Point Coal Terminal meant Mackay and Sarina small businesses would now have their chance to supply goods and services directly to the site.

"While this is the first time the BMA Local Buying Program will be available to small business in the Mackay region, BMA has demonstrated its commitment to the region in many ways.

"In fact in financial year 2014, BMA spent more than \$1 billion with Central Queensland business to support its operations which included over 300 Mackay based suppliers and contracting companies.

"But we understand that it continues to be a tough environment for many businesses in Central Queensland at the moment, so this is just another way we are doing what we can to support the region's economy.

"Our Hay Point Coal Terminal employs 280 local people on site across a range of areas including operations, production, maintenance, administration and health, safety and environment.

"Staff have received training regarding the Program and are tremendously keen to be involved and do what they can to allow local businesses to compete for business," he said.

Mayor for Mackay Regional Council, Deidre Comerford, joined Mr Dow for the official launch.

"I am delighted the BMA Local Buying Program is being extended to include the Hay Point Coal Terminal, which will benefit local small businesses," she said.

The successful Local Buying Community Foundation will also be opened to the Mackay region, to further support the Program and local businesses.

The Foundation is funded through the BMA Local Buying Program, with a percentage contribution from BMA for every transaction. Already more than \$500,000 has been contributed to the Foundation.

Chair of the Local Buying Community Foundation, Vincent Cosgrove, said the money raised is used to deliver business development programs and networking opportunities.

"These events help local businesses build capacity and respond to a more challenging business environment.

"While only in its second year, we have had excellent feedback both from Bowen Basin businesses who have done work for BMA directly, as well as those who have attended programs run by the Foundation, so we look forward to offering the same opportunities to Mackay businesses," he said.

The introduction of the BMA Local Buying Program in Mackay will enable local businesses that are registered, or have a primary place of business located in the Mackay local government boundary, to apply to become a BMA Local Buying Program vendor to quote for Hay Point work only – there will be no cross over with other BMA and BMC sites.

Small businesses with 25 or less full time employees can now register for the BMA Local Buying Program, with opportunities to quote on work available from 1 December.

Overall, the BMA Local Buying Program has awarded more than \$40 million to small businesses within the local communities of BMA's Bowen Basin operations since 2012. This is in addition to the money BMA spends locally each year as part of day-to-day business in the region.

The Program is administered by C-Res (Community Resourcing), a cost neutral entity set up to specifically deliver the program.