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PHOTO: PETER HOYT

Commercial group putting stamp of approval on Mackay economy

BUSINESS BUZZ AT PAGET

MACKAY is poised to come back on the boil and investors are vying for their slice of the action.

Despite a dark shadow cast over the mining services sector, prime real estate in the industrial area of Paget is being snapped up.

A group of Mackay businessmen, including Winston Group director Clinton Arentz (above), are securing their piece of Paget gold. They are buying big and investing early to secure their spot in the region's impending prosperity.

Investors buoyed by bright outlook

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ROLLER doors have been shut, lots are vacant but progress has been bubbling away under the surface at Paget.

Mackay's leading industrial zone has become a hive for investors who are looking towards the region's long-term potential.

And it's a group of Mackay businessmen who are at the forefront of the buzz, getting in early to lock in large land parcels before bigger players start spending.

The first stage of Winston Group's EVO Business Centre is set to come online

"If you are just worrying about what is happening today, you will kind-of miss the point," he said.

"You need to be worrying about what is happening in the next year and year after.

"There will be a recovery – Mackay will grow into a period of strength and this area will be front and centre of that."

The developer is adamant Mackay has thriving potential in its sights and his belief is shared.

Stephen Amos, of Tiats Accountants; Gary West, of Strategic Accountants; John Cooney, of Harvey World Travel; Peter Woolcock, of the Mackay Pet Superstore, and

“Mackay will grow into a period of strength and this area will be front and centre of that... – Clinton Arentz

within three weeks, just in time for the Queensland Mining Exhibition, as well as the end of financial year.

Winston Group director Clinton Arentz said it was a time when businesses' books would be reviewed and company directors would think of the future.

Standing in front of his two-stage \$15 million development, Mr Arentz didn't deny the mining servicing sector had slowed.

Mr Arentz have joined a syndicate to secure prime Paget real estate.

The group has bought a 10-hectare parcel of land behind the EVO Business Centre and plans to create a large-scale industrial development over the next five years.

"(Paget) is changing quite rapidly," he said. "Bunnings is being built, and... land has been bought by Scifleet, a big Toyota dealer from Brisbane."



GOING AHEAD: This aerial map, taken recently, highlights the areas earmarked for proposed Paget industrial developments including the parcel of land (right) purchased by a group of Mackay business people.



SET TO GO: It's hoped the existing EVO Business Centre will be fully occupied by Christmas. PHOTOS: PETER HOLT

MINING SERVICES | Vibrant future

MAIN deputy chairman Allan Ruming believes the mining services sector in Mackay has a vibrant future.

But he didn't dismiss the next 6-12 months would be difficult for businesses in Paget.

Paget was a scene of diversity, he said.

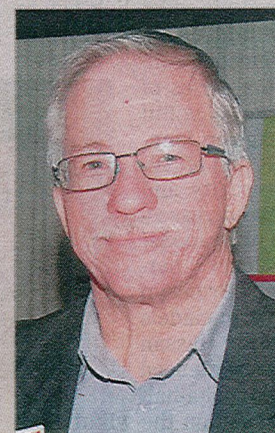
"There are some parts that are going flat out."

But the sad reality was there may be more businesses choosing to shut their doors during the tough uphill phase, he said.

Despite this, Mr Ruming described the atmosphere in Paget as being cautiously optimistic.

"If we knuckle down and look at what we can do, and see the opportunities we do have right now, we will be right for when things do pick up again."

"We can't hope for things to go back to the way they



MAIN deputy chairman Allan Ruming.

were. It was hectic and not sustainable.

"That's why some businesses have struggled, because their foundations were already shaking. It wasn't a normal period."

The whole community needs to work together to help drive input costs down.