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Keppel key to re-building local employment

The commencement of work on the revitalisation of Great Keppel Island moved one step closer with the recent advice from the state government Department of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy to proponent Altum Property Group, that Altum had been given the “green light” on their managerial capability to develop the iconic Queensland island. This project will deliver 500 construction jobs for the 12-year construction period and long-term will support 1,500 jobs, both on and off the island, enabling Central Queensland to commence their post-COVID economic recovery within months.

Altum Director Rob McCready said: “Our application requesting the transfer of the GKI leases from the current owner has been independently assessed by ‘Big 4’ consulting firm Deloitte. Their recent report stated that Altum has “the project management capabilities and experience to effectively deliver the residential/commercial aspects of the Project.””

Mr McCready continued; “Receiving this positive feedback was a huge milestone and we are working hard with local MP Brittany Lauga and state government public servants to progress to the next stage, which is to bring forward the planned early work on common user infrastructure for the island to start as early as September. These early works consist of cleaning up the significant debris and rubbish on the island and building infrastructure such as connection paths to lookouts, day tripper areas with picnic tables, shade sails and toilet facilities and improved roads access.”

The commencement of early works will facilitate new contracts and jobs on and off the island, with the estimated value of the early works injecting \$45m into the economy in the first 12 months, ramping up to deliver stage one of the resort accommodation, which is 100 hotel apartments.

Mr McCready said: “Where possible, we want to engage local consultants and employ CQ businesses and employees on the project. We know the region is doing it tough due to COVID-19 and that’s the reason we have suggested to Ms Lauga and the state government that bringing the infrastructure works forward will be the best thing for the island and for central Queensland. It will create jobs and bring momentum and energy to the local economic recovery.”

Altum are now waiting on the finalisation of the state government’s financial support for the project to progress to early works, which it expects any day. “Once we have this,” summarised Mr McCready, “we will be able to take all the necessary steps to start work on the island and help grow the CQ construction and tourism industries back up again to where they should be. We can’t wait to get started.”

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