

from the ceo's desk.....

A number of good news announcements for the North West this month.

The State Government is delivering a 10% subsidy on below-rail access charges for the next four years in a much-needed bid to support MITEZ industry, strengthen the freight corridor and boost the regional economy. By lowering rail transport costs, the Government is reinforcing the Mount Isa Line as critical freight infrastructure and the importance of effective and competitive supply chain movements between the North West Minerals Province and the Port of Townsville.

Thank you, **Crisafulli Government**, for this much advocated for financial relief. Users are grateful and potential proponents are keen. The subsidy also gives MITEZ some time to work with Government and Industry on a long-term vision and plans to realise a cost-effective, efficient and resilient freight mode to Port.

Speaking of which, **Port of Townsville** hosted a wonderful stakeholder breakfast event to celebrate annual milestones and to kick off another big year, while **Northern Stevedoring Services** launched their new \$5m Logistics Facility. Strengthened capacity to support growing demand across North West Queensland at Northern Australia's largest container and automotive Port – and the country's leading exporter of copper, zinc, lead and fertiliser.

The Queensland Treasurer announced a **\$50 million CopperString Community Benefits Fund**, supporting legacy projects across the seven MITEZ LGAs, prioritising housing, water and community infrastructure projects. A proportion of the funds will be administered by each specific LGA who have discussed their priorities directly with the Treasurer on his road trip through the corridor. Allocation of the final portion is yet to be announced. This initiative certainly bolsters the State Government's commitment to the biggest transformational energy project in the MITEZ corridor.

MITEZ will continue to urge the Government to expedite the delivery of the western link of the CopperString project.



All levels of Government were present in **Mount Isa for the Ministerial Roundtable**: Vision for the future of Mount Isa and the North West Minerals Province, together with Industry representatives. The key focus was to understand the whole-of-region economic potential of the NWMP and the potential future of copper smelting and refining, with key representatives contributing views to inform practical pathways for the transformation of the region.

Minister Last and **Minister Ayres** were clear that a long-term structural reset was the ultimate aim for the North West with the emphasis on securing the full copper value chain and broader industrial capability of the region. Industry capability, market and policy conditions, potential future pathways, regional supply chains, emerging project opportunities, investment appetite, energy considerations and the broader impacts for workers, communities, and regional economies were touched on during the Roundtable.

Expressions of Interest have closed on the Mount Isa Transformation Study. MITEZ has been clear that the study must look at long-term sustainable and resilient industry in the North West, taking into account the vast mining resources that form the cornerstone of the MITEZ corridor. It must focus on the inherent strengths of the mineral and processing sector, the well-established deep industry expertise, and build on this by ensuring the study examines pathways that are future-focused and globally competitive.

We want the MITEZ corridor to thrive for generations, not a short-term fix, we want sustainable outcomes that involve solutions not only around copper supply chains but all value supply chains, as well as solutions for energy, water and rail challenges.

The success of the MITEZ corridor hinges on the success of the outcomes of this study, recommendations must be thorough, robust, innovative and far ranging – the future of a region is at stake. If we get it wrong, reverberations will be felt far beyond the North West, there will be state and national ramifications.

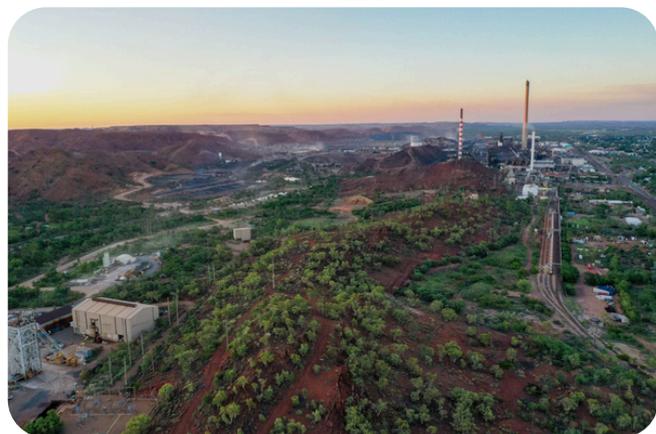


Photo credit: Mount Isa City Council



Spotlight on

MITEZ MEDIA RELEASE

MITEZ has formally called for the **Mount Isa Transformation Study** to deliver genuine structural reform – not short-term intervention – to secure the long-term future of the North West Minerals Province and the Mount Isa–Townsville corridor.

MITEZ is advocating for recommendations that strengthen interconnected industries, supply chains and communities across North West Queensland.

MITEZ CEO Maria James said the Study represents a critical inflection point for the region.

“We want the MITEZ corridor to thrive for generations – not operate under rolling rescue packages. Sustainable outcomes must involve solutions across energy, water and rail challenges, alongside diversified and resilient value supply chains.

The recommendations must be thorough, robust, innovative and far-reaching because the future of a region is at stake. If we get this wrong, the reverberations will extend well beyond the North West, with state and national ramifications.”

MITEZ’s position is clear: the Transformation Study must deliver a credible, investment-ready blueprint that accelerates growth across both established and emerging industries.

This includes:

- Reliable, affordable and scalable energy solutions
- Competitive and efficient freight and rail settings
- Long-term water security
- Streamlined regulatory and approvals frameworks
- Policy certainty to unlock private sector investment

The North West Minerals Province remains nationally significant, and the performance of the Mount Isa–Townsville corridor directly influences Queensland’s export capacity, critical minerals development and sovereign capability.

MITEZ will continue advocating for structural reform that ensures the corridor is positioned not just to survive transition – but to lead the next phase of regional and national economic growth.

[Read the full media release:](#)





RED Grant Program 2026/2027



for submissions!

MITEZ is pleased to announce that the **Regional Economic Development (RED) Grant Program** for 2026/2027 is now open, providing an exciting opportunity for member organisations to deliver impactful projects that strengthen economic growth across the MITEZ corridor.

The RED Program supports initiatives that drive regional development, stimulate investment, create jobs, encourage innovation, enhance tourism, and improve critical infrastructure. With a total funding pool of **\$250,000**, the program will support **five projects**, each receiving **\$50,000 in MITEZ funding**, matched by the member proponent through a 50:50 co-contribution arrangement.

Financial MITEZ members are invited to submit projects that align with RED Program objectives and demonstrate tangible benefits to the region. The application process consists of two structured stages:

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest (EOI)

EOIs are now open and must be submitted by **30 March 2026**. Successful applicants will be notified by **15 April 2026**.

Stage 2 – Full Project Proposal

Invited proponents will submit their detailed Project Proposal between **16 April** and **15 June 2026**, with final funding decisions announced by **30 June 2026**. Projects must commence in the 2026/2027 financial year and be completed by **30 June 2028**.

This funding is an excellent opportunity for MITEZ members to advance initiatives that boost economic resilience and deliver long-term benefits to communities across the region. We encourage organisations to begin preparing their project concepts and take full advantage of this valuable support.

Contact ceo@mitez.com.au for more information on the Program.

We look forward to receiving your proposals and supporting innovative projects that drive our region's future prosperity.





The Overlanders Way is a collaborative tourism initiative supported by LGAs across the corridor and facilitated by MITEZ

The Overlanders Way Tourism Group has reunited under the facilitation of MITEZ, with strong support from Mayors and councils across the corridor. The group has reaffirmed its purpose: reinvigorating drive tourism and strengthening the regional visitor experience through coordinated marketing, partnerships and shared storytelling.

Mayor Janene Fegan (McKinlay Shire) has accepted the role of Chair, and all of the 7 MITEZ councils have endorsed our role in administering and coordinating the group's activities, including marketing, planning, and development of new promotional tools.

Early discussions reaffirmed that the region has a strong foundation to build on, with signature attractions across the region and each LGA contributing unique stories in mining, agriculture, heritage, events and outback adventure.

Key Priorities Identified:

- **Drive Tourism:** Focus on caravan, RV and self-contained travellers across the corridor.
- **Events as Drivers:** Package rodeos, race meetings and major events into multi-stop itineraries.
- **Stronger Storytelling:** Highlight agriculture, transport heritage, defence history and mining, and many more across the region.
- **Marketing Foundations:** Relaunch social media, revamped logo, integrate Overlanders Way into the MITEZ website, and build event listings and itineraries.
- **Partnerships:** Explore collaborations with operators and expand opportunities for mine education tourism.

The Overlanders Way Tourism Group is entering a new phase: refreshed, collaborative, and strategically focused. With strong support from LGAs, a renewed emphasis on drive tourism, and with new digital and branding initiatives underway, the group is enthusiastic to elevate the corridor's visibility and attract more visitors to the North and North West.

To complement these updates, we've also introduced a refreshed logo. Alongside the new visual identity, we've launched dedicated **Instagram**, **Facebook** and **LinkedIn** pages to strengthen our online presence and make it easier for to stay connected. These platforms will feature news, event updates, member highlights, and behind-the-scenes insights, helping us with further engagement.

Reach out if you would like to be involved – meo@mitez.com.au



Spotlight on NEW MITEZ MEMBERS

OPTUS

Welcoming Optus: strengthening digital capability across the MITEZ Region

MITEZ is pleased to welcome Optus as our newest member, bringing extensive capabilities that extend well beyond traditional telecommunications. Optus has emerged as a national leader in digital transformation across ports, logistics, cloud, IoT, mobility, and cybersecurity all of which strongly align with regional priorities across the MITEZ region. Their growing presence in Northern Australia supports efforts to build a more connected, digitally enabled and resilient region.

At the 2025 Townsville Ports Roundtable, Optus highlighted how digitalisation is reshaping Australia's ports, demonstrating the value of **private 5G** for enabling real-time tracking, automated operations, improved worker safety and stronger cyber-resilience within complex port environments. These insights reinforce the importance of integrated digital systems for ports like Townsville, which play a central role in regional supply chains and future economic growth.

Optus has also taken a national leadership role in modernising Australia's **supply chain and logistics** sector, showcasing at industry forums how mobile-first technologies, integrated fleet management, IoT (Internet of Things) tools and digital safety systems are reducing operational costs and improving resilience for freight, warehousing and transport operations. Productivity gains of 15–25% using AI, digital twins, asset tracking and private wireless networks have been reported across logistics operations, highlighting major opportunities for the industries that underpin the MITEZ region.

Alongside this, Optus continues to invest in cloud, data and enterprise technology, including the implementation of a **Unified Data Platform** that has delivered significant efficiency improvements, reducing operational processing times by up to 50% and enabling faster, more secure data-driven decision-making.

MITEZ looks forward to working with Optus as we continue to support digital growth, innovation and economic development across North West Queensland.



Please join us in welcoming

LinkedIn - [Optus: Overview | LinkedIn](#)

Website - [Optus - Mobile Phones, nbn, Home Internet and Entertainment](#)



For more than 30 years, AEC Group has been delivering economics, strategy and advisory services that help regions unlock growth, attract investment and plan for long-term prosperity.

AEC works across regional development, infrastructure strategy, business case development, economic impact assessment, workforce planning and industry strategy. The firm partners with local government, state and federal agencies, development organisations and industry to translate complex economic analysis into practical, actionable outcomes.

With a strong presence in Northern Australia, AEC is actively supporting regional communities to:

- Develop industry and economic development strategies
- Assess and prioritise enabling infrastructure
- Prepare investment-ready business cases
- Support funding submissions and advocacy
- Analyse workforce demand and regional capability gaps
- Communicate clear evidence to support decision-making

Led locally by Kate Haycock, Market Leader – Regional Development & Northern Australia, AEC is committed to supporting sustainable economic growth across the Mount Isa to Townsville corridor and the broader North West Minerals Province.



AEC recognises the strategic importance of the MITEZ region – particularly in critical minerals, energy transition, industrial diversification, workforce development and enabling infrastructure. As projects accelerate across the corridor, strong evidence-based planning and collaboration between industry, government and regional stakeholders will be essential.

“We see enormous opportunity across North and North West Queensland,” Kate said.

“MITEZ plays a vital role in connecting industry and government, advocating for infrastructure and strengthening regional identity. We look forward to contributing practical insights that support long-term investment and resilience.”

“We look forward to working alongside MITEZ and its members to support a strong, diversified and globally competitive regional economy.”

Australia releases new Critical Minerals Prospectus – strong outlook for the North West

The Australian Government has released the **2026 Australian Critical Minerals Prospectus**, unveiled by **Minister for Resources Madeleine King** during ministerial meetings in Washington, DC in February. The Prospectus showcases 49 mines and 29 midstream processing projects now ready for investment, positioning Australia as a global leader in critical minerals supply chains. Minister King emphasised that Australia has both “the deposits and the know-how to develop critical minerals projects reliably, sustainably and at scale”.

The Prospectus highlights opportunities across rare earths, lithium, cobalt, vanadium, graphite, manganese and more, forming the backbone of clean energy technologies, battery systems, and strategic defence applications.

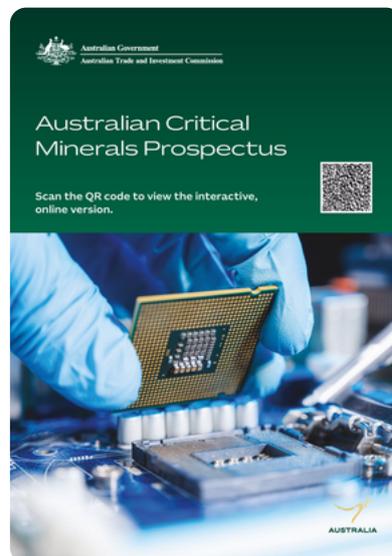
Spotlight on the MITEZ Region

The MITEZ region, already known for its rich resource base, stands out strongly in the national landscape. One of the key members, **Richmond Vanadium**, is advancing one of Australia’s most significant vanadium projects. Vanadium is classified as a critical mineral due to its essential role in vanadium redox flow batteries, grid-scale storage, and emerging green energy technologies.

Another notable contributor within the broader North Queensland resources landscape is **QPM Energy**, part of **Queensland Pacific Metals**. QPM is continuing to expand its energy and critical minerals focus, including securing government and partner support for work associated with the TECH Project and broader critical-minerals-linked initiatives. Their growing energy business positions them as an important player in supporting the state’s ambition to build value-added processing and diversify Queensland’s critical minerals sector.

With global partners seeking stable, high-standard supply of strategic minerals, the release of the Prospectus presents a significant opportunity for North West Queensland. MITEZ Members are well positioned to support Australia’s ambition to lead in critical minerals production, downstream processing, and advanced manufacturing.

The **full Prospectus** is now available online and provides an interactive map of all investment-ready projects across the country.



New rail subsidy set to cut freight costs across the North West

Earlier this month, the State Government announced a new cost-relief measure for freight operators, introducing a 10 per cent subsidy on below-rail access charges for the Mount Isa Rail Line. The subsidy will run for the next four years and is designed to help lower freight costs across the North West Minerals Province.

As the key freight corridor linking the North West to the **Port of Townsville**, the Mount Isa Rail Line plays a critical role in moving mineral concentrates, processed metals, fertilisers, phosphate rock, and acid to domestic and international markets. MITEZ, along with other Industry groups, have long advocated for measures to make rail freight more competitive and more resilient particularly given rising transport costs and the importance of ensuring long-term corridor reliability.



Photo credit: Port of Townsville



Minister for Transport and Main Roads **Brent Mickelberg** said the new subsidy delivers practical support for the region's economic backbone.

"We know transport costs can be a real pressure on industry in the north and this subsidy will encourage a shift from road to rail, improving safety on our roads and strengthening long-term freight resilience," Minister Mickelberg said.

The introduction of the subsidy marks a positive outcome for industry stakeholders who have consistently highlighted the need to reduce the cost burden on the region's exporters. By making rail freight more accessible and cost-effective, the initiative is expected to improve supply chain efficiency, support regional competitiveness, and boost confidence for long-term investment in the North West Minerals Province.



► **NEWS UPDATE**
State Government
announces Mount Isa
Rail Line subsidy



Photo credit: ABC NW, Queensland Rail & MITEZ

Evolution Mining advances study on new “Bert” ore body Near Ernest Henry

MITEZ member **Evolution Mining** has announced a technical study into a newly identified gold and copper ore body, known as Bert, located near the **Ernest Henry operations** outside Cloncurry.

The discovery sits close to existing open-pit infrastructure and presents an opportunity to increase short-term production. While it is not expected to extend the mine’s life beyond its current post-2035 outlook, the development could support additional regional employment and optimise use of the existing processing plant without requiring significant infrastructure changes.

The technical study will be presented to Evolution’s board this month, with outcomes and next steps to be determined following review.

This announcement reinforces the ongoing strength of the Cloncurry district and the continued investment confidence within the **Mount Isa–Townsville corridor**.

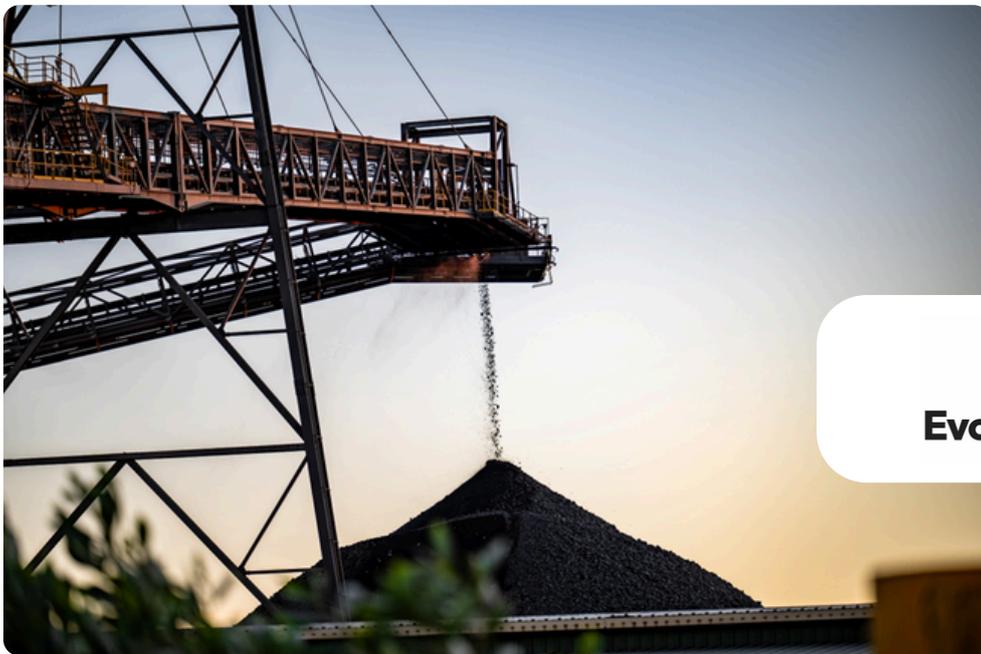


Photo credit: Evolution Mining



AIC Mines reaches Jericho copper deposit

AIC Mines has announced a significant milestone at the **Eloise operation**, with the underground access drive successfully reaching the Jericho copper deposit. This achievement marks an important step in progressing Jericho as the next phase of growth for the Eloise mine and further strengthens the long-term outlook for copper production within the North West Queensland corridor.

The development face has intersected the J1 lens, with visible copper sulphide mineralisation consistent with the geological model outlined in the company's recent ASX announcement.

This milestone reinforces the strategic importance of the Mount Isa–Townsville corridor in supporting Australia's critical minerals and copper supply chain.

🔗 **View the ASX announcement here:** https://lnkd.in/g_6fPG-i

Future Drought Fund 2024–25 Annual Report now available

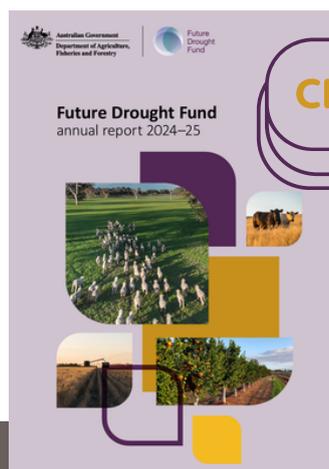
The Future Drought Fund is part of the Australian Government's drought, disaster and rural support program has released its **2024–25 Annual Report**, outlining national progress in strengthening drought and climate resilience, including regions across the MITEZ corridor.

Last year marked the beginning of a new four-year **funding cycle (2024–2028)**, with key achievements including:

- 42 new regional drought resilience plans, bringing the total to 57.
- More than 59,000 people involved in leadership and local resilience initiatives.
- Establishment of a First Nations Advisory Group and development of the first targeted First Nations grant.
- 67,000+ farmers participating in training and skills development.
- 36,600+ users accessing the My Climate View climate-planning tool.
- Release of a new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework.

These outcomes help build long-term capacity and preparedness for communities across northern Queensland. The FDF was set up in 2019. The Australian Government invested an initial **\$3.9 billion** into the Fund. The earnings from this are reinvested. The Fund is expected to grow to **\$5 billion** by 2028–2029.

Each year, **\$100 million** is made available for **FDF grants** and **programs**.



CHECK IT OUT

Read the full report

Spotlight on THE MITEZ ENERGY CORRIDOR

APA

 DP ENERGY

 ERGON
ENERGY
NETWORK
Part of Energy Queensland

 Iberdrola  potentia
energy

 Powerlink  COPPERSTRING 2032

 QPM
ENERGY

As the MITEZ region accelerates towards becoming a major clean-energy and industrial growth corridor, our members continue to play a central role in shaping its future. From large-scale renewable generation to grid-enabling infrastructure, critical minerals processing and innovative community partnerships, each organisation is contributing to the region's transformation into a resilient, competitive and sustainable powerhouse. The following updates highlight recent achievements, project milestones and collaborative work underway across the corridor. MITEZ will continue championing the region's transition to a low-emissions, investment-ready economy, mindful that members at times face delays and uncertainty arising from broader political and regulatory processes.

APA

APA's Mount Isa and Cloncurry Community Grants Program continues to strengthen local communities by supporting grassroots initiatives across the region. The program runs twice yearly and offers up to \$5,000 for local community groups, schools, and organisations to deliver projects that enhance wellbeing, celebrate culture, and improve local services. Recent funding rounds have backed initiatives ranging from Indigenous cultural programs to health, ageing, safety, and arts projects, reflecting APA's commitment to community-led impact in regional and remote areas. The next round of grants opens on March 9, providing another opportunity for eligible groups to apply and bring meaningful projects to life.

APA has renewable assets across Australia, from the Pilbara in Western Australia to Darling Downs in Queensland as well as Dugald River Solar Farm - the nation's largest remote grid solar farm. APA's broader strategy focuses on supporting the energy transition while maintaining the best interests of customers, consumers and communities. Our new and existing projects are focused on helping the energy industry decarbonise, while supporting renewables as more come online. This is essential for regional areas across Australia which are expecting continued growth in the demand for renewables.

DP Energy is currently developing one of the most significant new renewable development's directly within the MITEZ region.

The Windy Plains Renewable Energy Park, located ~40 km southeast of Julia Creek in McKinlay Shire, includes up to 1,400 MW of wind capacity supported by 500 MW / 2,000 MWh of battery storage, positioning it as a cornerstone project for North West Queensland's clean energy economy.

Importantly for the MITEZ region, the project is being designed to connect into Powerlink's CopperString transmission expansion, enabling large scale renewable generation and new industrial opportunities across the North West Minerals Province. DP Energy is hopeful that clearer guidance will be provided over the coming year regarding the timing of delivery for the Western Section of CopperString, which is essential to the project's connection pathway and broader regional energy outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement underway includes consultation with First Nations groups, early neighbours, McKinlay Shire Council, and regional communities, reinforcing strong local participation.

[DP Energy](#)



Part of Energy Queensland

In a state with some of the world's highest rooftop solar penetration rates, Ergon Energy Network continues to support the integration of small and large-scale renewable energy, including in the MITEZ region.

Ergon have another 880 megawatts of large-scale renewable energy project connections underway across Queensland.

To enhance transparency and support timely, efficient connections for new generation and storage, Ergon is introducing a connections guarantee, in line with the Queensland Energy Roadmap.

This initiative will play a critical role in facilitating private investment in major projects and accelerating the energy transition by ensuring clear service standards and accountability.

By keeping up the momentum and working in partnership with industry and communities, Ergon is helping to unlock the benefits for the region.

[Our Network | Ergon Energy](#)



Iberdrola Australia's most significant MITEZ-relevant activity is its growing investment in Central and North Queensland battery and solar developments, including the Broadsound Solar Farm and BESS and other Queensland storage initiatives that strengthen the grid into which CopperString will connect. These large-scale storage projects improve resilience and enable more renewable generation in the North-West to be exported eastward.

[Home | Iberdrola Australia](#)



Julia Creek Renewable Energy Project

This project has the potential to deliver up to 1GW of installed capacity, comprising wind generation with future integration of solar PV and BESS, subject to grid studies and optimisation outcomes.

The project footprint is dependent on site surveys and grid studies and will be under agreement with a single landholder, providing strong site control and long-term development certainty.

Over the past 12 months, key milestones achieved include:

- Aviation Impact Assessment
- Installation of a meteorological mast
- Deployment of wind-monitoring LiDAR to enhance resource modelling
- Completion of desktop environmental and cultural heritage due diligence
- Development of an initial wind farm layout based on constraint mapping
- Preliminary social impact assessment
- Appointment of a lead planning consultant to manage the approvals pathway
- Ongoing engagement with Powerlink regarding connection strategy

These activities establish a robust technical and environmental baseline as the project advances into more detailed field surveys, including seasonal bird and bat studies, hydrology and geotechnical investigations, cultural heritage agreements, flood modelling, and structured community engagement. Progression of activities is dependant on the construction of the WesternLink.

Eureka Renewable Energy Project

This project near Cloncurry is similarly aligned with the WesternLink transmission corridor. With potential installed capacity of up to 1GW of wind generation and integrated BESS, Eureka represents a significant long-term infrastructure investment in the region.

The project area is dependent on site surveys and grid studies and is under agreement with a single landholder, providing streamlined land access and coordinated development.

Recent milestones include:

- Deployment of wind-monitoring LiDAR, with 12 months of high-quality resource data collected
- Installation of a meteorological mast
- Completion of flora and fauna on-site assessments
- Preliminary flood modelling and topographic surveys
- Cultural heritage agreements executed
- Aviation impact assessment
- Community engagement
- Ongoing engagement with Powerlink on connection planning

The forward program includes further seasonal bird and bat surveys, targeted endangered species assessments, additional geotechnical and hydrology studies. Progression of activities is dependant on the construction of the WesternLink.

[Powerlink Queensland | Leading Renewable Energy Developer in Australia](#)



Powerlink Queensland acquired the CopperString project in March 2023. CopperString will deliver affordable, reliable and sustainable energy to North and North West Queensland, supporting new jobs and driving economic growth across regional communities and industry.

Over the past three years, Powerlink has undertaken extensive work to progress the project, including progressing design, advancing project approvals, securing critical electrical equipment and improving overall construction readiness. A major milestone was recently achieved with Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID) approval for the Flinders Substation, enabling construction to proceed. On-the-ground bulk earthworks for the Flinders Substation are expected to begin in late 2026.

CopperString has always been more than a transmission line – it is a community building project. Just this month the Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Energy, David Janetzki announced the roll-out of a \$50 million CopperString Community Benefits Fund to provide support for priority housing, water and local infrastructure projects delivered in Townsville, Charters Towers, Flinders Shire, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry and Mount Isa.

Following the release of the Queensland Government's Energy Roadmap in October 2025, it was announced that CopperString will transition to the Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC), who will develop, deliver, own, operate and maintain the asset.

Under this new delivery model, CopperString East will commence construction by 2028 with completion by 2032. It involves constructing nearly 350 kilometres of 330-kilovolt transmission line from Reid River (near Townsville) to Hughenden, providing 1.7 gigawatts of transfer capacity and 2.5 gigawatts of hosting capacity.

The Energy Roadmap also commits \$200 million towards a North West Energy Fund to boost local renewable energy generation, battery storage and microgrids, improving energy reliability for communities including Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry and Mount Isa.

Powerlink Queensland and QIC continue to work closely to ensure a smooth transition of the CopperString project.

[Powerlink | Connecting Queenslanders](#)



QPM Energy's activities have direct implications for the MITEZ region, with its power, gas and processing operations centred between Moranbah, Townsville and the broader north.

QPM Energy is targeting near term construction of the 112MW Isaac Power Station. It has secured 2 x 56MW aeroderivative gas turbines from GE Vernova, which are currently being shipped to Queensland for arrival in April 2026. The company has also signed a Connection Project Delivery Agreement with Powerlink Queensland, which will facilitate the connection of the Isaac Power Station to the Queensland Grid.

This project strengthens dispatchable supply into the central-north network that services industry along the MITEZ corridor.

[Home - QPM](#)

Port of Townsville Berth upgrades strengthen trade capacity

Our valued member, the **Port of Townsville Limited**, has further strengthened North Queensland's trade capacity with the completion of critical upgrades to berths three and four – two of the port's busiest operational areas.

Delivered in partnership with the Queensland Government, the works remove a longstanding operational bottleneck by extending the reach of the port's Liebherr ship-to-shore crane across both berths. This enhancement significantly improves vessel turnaround times for containerised and general cargo, increasing efficiency across the supply chain.

The upgrade directly supports regional exporters, importers and industry by enabling smoother operations and faster freight movement through the port – a vital gateway for the Mount Isa to Townsville corridor.

Importantly, more than 85 per cent of the project was delivered locally, ensuring strong economic flow-on benefits to North Queensland contractors, suppliers and workers.

The Port of Townsville plays a critical role in supporting thousands of jobs and connecting regional industries to national and international markets. Strategic infrastructure investments such as this reinforce the port's position as a key economic enabler for the broader North and North West Queensland region.

MITEZ congratulates the Port of Townsville on delivering practical infrastructure that enhances productivity, strengthens supply chains and builds long-term regional resilience.



Townsville industry breakfast highlights pipeline opportunities across the MITEZ corridor

MITEZ CEO Maria James joined industry, government and regional stakeholders at the recent Industry Breakfast, which delivered strong engagement and valuable project insights. Presentations from **Sunshine Metals Ltd**, **Department of Housing and Public Works**, **Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)**, **Industry Capability Network** and **Townsville Brewing Co** outlined current and upcoming projects, procurement pathways and opportunities for local suppliers.



The session demonstrated the scale of momentum building across the **MITEZ economic corridor** and the opportunity for regional industry to actively participate in the expanding project pipeline. Engagement throughout the morning reinforced the importance of collaboration in strengthening corridor-wide economic outcomes.



Queensland Innovation Events Fund

Purpose: Supports Queensland-based organisations to deliver events that showcase, test, or explore new and emerging innovations, build innovation capability, strengthen regional innovation ecosystems, and help businesses adopt or commercialise innovative products, processes, or services.

Funding Available: Between **\$10,000** and **\$25,000** (excluding GST), covering up to 50% of total eligible cash expenditure.

Eligibility: Applicants must:

- Be a legal entity with an active ABN and registered for GST
- Be headquartered in Queensland and operating for at least 12 months
- Be the event owner
- Hold (or obtain) \$20 million public liability insurance
- Submit only one application per round
- Events must be delivered in Queensland by 31 December 2026
- Individuals and state or federal governments are not eligible.

Closing Date: Monday, 16 March 2026 at 10:00am (Round 1)

Status: **OPEN**

Link: [Innovation Events Fund | Advance Queensland](#)

Powering the Regions Fund – Safeguard Transformation Stream (Round 2)

Purpose: Supports trade-exposed facilities covered by the Safeguard Mechanism to reduce emissions, prevent carbon leakage, and build workforce capability in new equipment or processes that cut Scope 1 emissions.

Funding Available: Approximately **\$321 million** is available across the program from 2025–26 to 2032–33. Individual grant amounts are not specified on the summary page, but support is targeted toward emissions-reduction projects at eligible safeguard facilities.

Eligibility: Applicants must:

- Be an owner or operator of a trade-exposed Safeguard Mechanism facility (excluding new or expanded coal or gas facilities)
- Have an ABN
- Be an entity incorporated in Australia, a company limited by guarantee, or an incorporated association. Entities on the National Redress Scheme non-participation list or non-compliant with the Workplace Gender Equality Act are not eligible.

Closing Date: 6 May 2027, 5:00 pm (ACT local time)

Status: **OPEN**

Link: [Current Grant Opportunity View – GO8016: GrantConnect](#)

Games On! Grassroots Infrastructure Program

Purpose: A \$30 million Queensland Government initiative supporting sporting clubs and organisations to upgrade local sports infrastructure, improve accessibility, enhance participation, and build community-focused facilities as Queensland prepares for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Funding Available: Total program funding: \$30 million.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include sporting clubs and organisations across Queensland seeking to upgrade community-level sports facilities or deliver larger shared-use infrastructure projects. Applicants must register their interest to be considered.

Closing Date: 18 March 2026 (EOI / Registration of Interest)

Status: OPEN

Link: [Games On! Grassroots Infrastructure Program | Recreation, sport and arts | Queensland Government](#)

Small Business Drought Loan (AgBiz Drought Loan)

Purpose: Supports small businesses in drought-affected regions that supply goods or services to farm businesses. The loan helps eligible businesses manage and recover from drought, maintain operations, pay expenses, and refinance certain existing debts.

Funding Available: Up to \$500,000 per loan, with: 10-year loan term; First 5 years interest-only, followed by 5 years of principal + interest; No application or early repayment fees

Eligibility: Applicants must be:

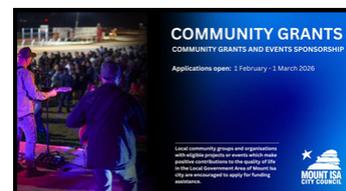
- A small business supplying primary-production-related goods/services to farm businesses in drought-affected areas
- An Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Running a viable business able to repay after the interest-only period
- Registered with an ABN and GST
- Holding existing commercial debt (at least 50% of total debt initially with a commercial lender)
- Not a farm business and fewer than 20 employees

Closing Date: Open – Apply at any time

Status: OPEN

Link: [AgBiz Drought Loans | business.gov.au](#)

Seeking a Letter of Support? A strong letter from MITEZ can enhance your grant application by demonstrating strategic alignment and regional impact across the **MITEZ corridor**. Members and stakeholders are encouraged to contact the CEO at ceo@mitez.com.au to arrange a Letter of Support, providing a brief outline of the project scope, economic impact, timelines and funding sought.



EGRU 2026 training & events update

JCU's Economic Geology Research Centre (EGRU) has released its 2026 schedule, offering a strong lineup of professional development opportunities and industry engagement events. The program includes a mix of online, on-campus and field-based short courses covering ore textures, QGIS, structural targeting, exploration geochemistry, field training and exploration geophysics.

Information on Professional Development Short Courses can be found on the EGRU website here - [Professional Development Short Courses](#)

March courses to note:

- **QGIS for Mineral Exploration – 10, 11, 17, 18 March**

4 x stand-alone half-day modules – A series of modules for geoscientists keen to develop their QGIS skills, use QGIS more effectively in their exploration programs, get the most out of spatial datasets, and learn from an expert presenter.

Course Leader: Mr Grant Boxer

- **Predictive Lithospheric Structural Targeting for Giant Discoveries – 25, 26 March**

2 x half day sessions – This one-day course provides an opportunity to learn from an explorer with over 35 years global experience in technical leadership and project generation and management. The course will cover targeting at multiple scales for a wide range of commodities, and will consider the latest models, best practices and case studies.

Course Leader: Dr Nick Hayward

The **EGRU Engagement Day** will be held in Townsville on **Friday 6 March**, with registration now open.

[EGRU Engagement Day 2026](#)

In April, EGRU will host the annual **Mineral Systems of North East Queensland Workshop** in Charters Towers, featuring presentations, core viewing and an optional field trip. Industry contributors interested in presenting are encouraged to contact Kaylene Camuti. Details on the Workshop can be found here - [Workshops](#)



JAMES COOK
UNIVERSITY
AUSTRALIA

EGRU 



Are you ready to boost skills in your community?

With \$5 million available in funding, the Queensland Government's Local Skills Solutions program is here to empower employers, industry, and community organisations to work together and fill local training gaps.

A grant of up to **\$250,000** could bring your project to life!

Learn more and apply <https://brnw.ch/21wZzF6>



Glencore, Mount Isa Mines is hosting a Community Information Session next week and inviting the community to hear directly from the team about what's happening across operations and what's ahead.

Tuesday, 3 March 2026

5:30pm refreshments | 6:00pm start

John Middlin Centre, Church Street, Mount Isa

Updates will include organisational changes, smelter and refinery developments, Enterprise Agreement progress, future investment plans, operational highlights, career opportunities and the company's socio-economic contribution to the region.



Mount Isa Mines Apprenticeship Program – Round Two Open

Applications are now open for the second round of the 2026 Mount Isa Mines Apprenticeship Program, offering pathways into a range of skilled trade careers across North West Queensland.

If you're ready to kick-start your trade career, apply now via:

<https://glencore.ws/MIMApprenticeship>

Applications **close 17 March 2026.**



Prepare for the 2026 Corporate Social Investment Fund

Not-for-profit organisations in Mount Isa and Townsville are encouraged to prepare now for the 2026 Corporate Social Investment Fund (CSIF).

The Fund supports projects in:

Infrastructure | Community health and wellbeing | Environment | Education and skills | Local enterprise

The next round **opens 1 May 2026.**

To check eligibility and download the application form, visit:

<https://glencore.ws/CSIF> → **Community → Funding opportunities.**

NSS marks 55 years of service in the North West with unveiling of new port logistics container park

Northern Stevedoring Services (NSS) proudly celebrated 55 years of continuous operations in the North West with a special anniversary event that brought together employees, customers, and community stakeholders. The milestone occasion highlighted the company's longstanding contribution to regional industry while showcasing its vision for the future, most notably through the official unveiling of the new Port Logistics Container Park.

The event commenced with a formal presentation reflecting on NSS's journey since its beginnings in 1971 on Berth 3, where the business first provided stevedoring services to MIM, handling lead and copper exports. What started as a small operation has since evolved into the largest regional stevedoring company in northern Australia, now managing diverse and complex cargo across mining, resources, and renewable sectors.

Guests were reminded of the scale and capability of today's operations, most notably that NSS's largest berth is long enough to load two vessels simultaneously, a testament to the company's continued investment in efficiency and capacity.

A highlight of the event was the recognition of two long-serving employees, whose dedication and commitment have played an essential role in shaping the company's culture and operational excellence. Their service exemplifies the strength and loyalty that have built NSS's reputation over the past five decades.

The centrepiece of the day was the opening ceremony for the new Port Logistics Container Park, a modern facility designed to expand service capability and streamline customer operations. This new development marks a significant step in NSS's long-term infrastructure growth strategy.

In future, the site is planned to incorporate a 500-metre rail siding, enabling enhanced intermodal connectivity and unlocking even greater logistics efficiencies for customers across the region.

The tour of the facility highlighted the recent upgrades, technological enhancements, and the operational capabilities that enable NSS to safely manage cargo of varying size, weight, and complexity including the intricate lifts increasingly required by mining and renewable-energy customers.

Congratulations on 55 years. The continued growth of NSS opens exciting opportunities in the MITEZ region and beyond.



Save The Date

MITEZ
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2026 Event Calendar

Key dates for MITEZ engagement

General Meeting Forum 1

Friday 27 March
Forum 1: Activation of Strategic Plan
Location: Townsville



Roadshow 1

Wednesday 13 & Thursday 14 May
LGA, regional members & other businesses
Location: Charters Towers & Hughenden

General Meeting Forum 2

Thursday 16 July
MITEZ's major event of the year, *The Long Lunch* will be held in Julia Creek with a Paddock to Plate theme, highlighting North West flood recovery and supporting local graziers while showcasing the strength & resilience of the region's agricultural sector.



Roadshow 2

Tuesday 13 & Wednesday 14 October
LGA, regional members & other businesses
Location: Mount Isa



Annual General Meeting & General Meeting Forum 3

Thursday 5 November
Review achievements and future plans
Location: Townsville



Partner with MITEZ —
sponsorship opportunities
available across the NW corridor



SAVE THE DATE

What's on along the MITEZ CORRIDOR

North West Queensland Floods

RURAL BUSINESS Disaster Recovery Support

Dedicated support to help you and your business get back on track following disaster.

Free Impartial Confidential

Our experienced team provide assistance tailored to your situation.

We can work with you across many aspects of your business and through the disaster recovery process in the immediate and long-term, including:

- assistance applying for government support (disaster and non-disaster)
- cashflow issues
- dealing with debt, negotiating with banks, ATOs and creditors
- referrals to other services and programs
- managing your personal wellbeing and mental health
- planning for a strong future for you and your business

Supporting your recovery every step of the way

Our Rural Financial Counsellors work across our North Queensland region alongside their colleagues Small Business Financial Counsellors and Business Wellness Coaches. Find out more about how we can support you and your business on our website.

Get connected

Our team has extensive experience in disaster recovery with NG businesses and provide structured, practical assistance - working with you by phone, online or in person.

Rural Financial Counsellors

Emma Cook
emma.cook@rfcnq.com.au
0499 755 233

Lynette McGuffie
lynette@rfcnq.com.au
0429 231 793

Head office - general enquiries
rfcnq@rfcnq.com.au
07 4652 5669

rfcnq.com.au/disaster-recovery

RFCNSQ is funded by the Australian Government, Queensland Government and the jointly funded Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Supporting rural and small businesses across North Queensland through all seasons

RFCNS SBFC BWC

JULIA CREEK

DIRT AND DUST FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

17-19 APRIL 2026

Queensland

Liberty Rural 2026 Maxi Races

5th Anniversary 11th of April

GATES OPEN AT MIDDAY

\$5 Per Person (includes a refreshment tray)

5 RACE PROGRAM

FASHION ON THE FIELD

THE MAXI MILE

FOOT RACES

SUPER AUCTION

TIG OF WAR

KIDS ENTERTAINMENT

RECOVERY BREAKFAST

Courtesy Pic from Richmond

Proudly Sponsored By Liberty rural RICHMOND & CLONCURRY

get ready, 'Straya!

GOES LIVE TOMORROW SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1st

www.thebigshout.org

MCKINLAY SHIRE

WANT TO CHAT IN PERSON?

QUENTIN Psychologist

SUNSHINE Speech Pathologist

JANELLE Occupational Therapist

MON 2 - WED 4 MARCH

Book your face-to-face appointment now

\$25 appointments for McKinlay Shire residents.

outback FUTURES

Curry Merry Muster Festival

2026 STREET PARADE THEME

AUG 30 - SEPT 6, 2026

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Time to get your best creation skills on Cloncurry!

ARE YOU STUDYING ?

Country Universities Centre

COUNTRY UNIVERSITIES CENTRE MOUNT ISA IS A FREE, SAFE, SECURE STUDY FACILITY FOR ANYONE STUDYING WITH ANY HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN AUSTRALIA.

- Quiet place to study
- Free high speed internet
- Student access 6am to midnight
- Free printing
- Dual screen computers
- Refreshments
- Local student community
- Face-to-face local support

REGISTER ONLINE

www.cucmountisa.edu.au

PLAN THE PERFECT OUTBACK SOUNDS WEEKEND IN MOUNT ISA

THE OUTBACK STRAYA

BUCHANAN PARK, MOUNT ISA SAT 09 MAY

OUTBACK SOUNDS

KAYLEE BELL (NZ)

THE WOLFE BROTHERS

ZAC & GEORGE + TAYLOR MOSS

WILLIAM BARTON + HOMEGROWN TRIO

2026 TOYOTA STAR MAKER

LOCAL ARTISTS → LIVE DRAWING → CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

QMF

ROCKHANA

GEM, MINERAL AND MINING FIELD DAY

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY 4TH JULY 2026

THE CLONCURRY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MARKETS

SUNDAY 5TH JULY 2026

Country Universities Centre

Bringing degrees closer to regional, rural and remote Australia.

16 Miles Street
Ph: 0477 549 938

HIGHBURN FESTIVAL OF OUTBACK SKIES

ART COMPETITION

All mediums welcome!

Draw inspiration from the outback skies.

WINNER - \$1000

PEOPLES CHOICE \$500

Entries open up until the 29 April 2026.

ENTRY FORM AND FULL T&CS CAN BE FOUND AT FESTIVALOFOUTBACKSKIES.COM.AU

ENTER TODAY!

HIGHBURN FESTIVAL OF OUTBACK SKIES

BROUGHT TO YOU BY SHIRE OF FLINDERS

BOOK TICKETS NOW

DAY 1 FRIDAY MAY 1ST 6:00PM

OPENING NIGHT BULLS & BRONCS

Cuppa with the Councillors

8:30 am

18 February

25 March

29 April

27 May

24 June

22 July

26 August

23 September

25 November

16 December

MOUNT ISA COUNCIL

Calling All Volunteers!

Help bring the Festival of Outback Skies 2026 to life

We have a range of volunteering opportunities available over the weekend to match your needs and availability.

Register your interest online or reach out to the team to chat more about opportunities.

We have a range of volunteer perks including goodie bags and event and drink tickets.

OUTBACK SKIES

Contact: Jennifer on 4741 2933 or email tdo@flinders.qld.gov.au

MITEZ

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Join us to collectively explore our strategic initiatives and the opportunities ahead

FRIDAY 27 MARCH 2026

**Venue: The Metropole Hotel
81 Palmer St, Townsville**

Member-led updates on key industry developments
impacting the MITEZ corridor

Activation of Our Strategic Plan

Open to MITEZ members and stakeholders



REGISTER NOW

Event Enquiries

Jennifer Vrana | Executive Officer |
EO@mitez.com.au | 0419 802 708

WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAM

Start your career today

Civil Safety is excited to partner with industry stakeholders and employers across the Charters Towers region to deliver a hands-on work preparation program leading to a job. We're currently seeking expressions of interest from job seekers aged 17 and over who are ready to start work. This engaging program provides students with essential job-readiness skills including resume writing, communication, time management, and organisation. You'll also gain valuable industry exposure through on-site employer visits, practical work experience and opportunity to transition to work in various industries.



Course Delivery

On-site training

Information Session:
Wednesday 15th April
11am



Duration

2 weeks

1 week work preparation
1 week work placement



Date & Location

Monday 20 April to
Friday 1 May 2026

Location TBC



Fee

\$500+ GST
or
ISEP funded eligibility criteria
applies
Non-accredited

COURSE OVERVIEW



Get job-ready with Civil Safety and On Common Country's Work Placement Program. This hands-on program is designed to give you real insight into various industries, helping you build skills, explore career pathways, and prepare for full-time employment through industry and practical experience. The program includes the nationally-accredited CPCWHS1001 Construction White Card course.



ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

You must be at least 17 years of age, with a sufficient level of language, numeracy and literacy. First Nations are encouraged to apply.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST OR FIND OUT MORE

This course is funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) under the Indigenous Skills and Employment (ISEP) program and aims to connect First Nations to jobs, career advancement opportunities, and new training and job-ready activities.

Please contact us on 0427 173 617 or via email at jeanie.h@civilsafety.edu.au to find out more.

BUILD SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE WITH **FEE-FREE TAFE** CONSTRUCTION



Fee-Free TAFE Construction is an initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments, supporting the delivery of high-priority construction qualifications.

General training pathway

Eligible students who have completed a qualification through Fee-Free TAFE, are also able to access a general training pathway under Fee-Free TAFE Construction funding.

Apprenticeship / traineeship pathway

Eligible students can access certificate III or IV level apprenticeship or traineeship. They must be employed as an apprentice or trainee with a valid registered contract signed between 1 July 2025 and 31 December 2026.

CERTIFICATE II IN PLUMBING SERVICES 11054NAT

Start: Monday 9 February 2026

Delivery: Full time Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays on campus, 80 hours of vocational placement required throughout course

Location: TAFE Queensland Townsville Trade Training Centre (Bohle)



**LEARN
MORE**

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for Fee-Free TAFE Construction funding, you must be:

- an Australian or New Zealand citizen or Australian permanent resident (including humanitarian entrants), or a temporary resident with the necessary visa and work permits on the pathway to permanent residency
- a Queensland resident
- aged 15 years or older and no longer at school
- not currently enrolled in another qualification (excluding foundation for the general training pathway).

PLEASE NOTE

Fee-Free TAFE Construction places are limited and courses may be subject to change.

For more information contact TAFE Queensland north region Business Development Team

E: BusinessDevelopment.North@tafeqld.edu.au

M: 0458 004 239

// APPLY NOW

tafeqld.edu.au | 1300 308 233

Our Members

