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OVER THE MOON WITH SPACE INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Following the arrival of US Ambassador to Australia Caroline Kennedy into Cairns overnight, high level dignitaries from all over the world met today in the lead up to preliminary works commencing on Australia's first large-scale, multi-use spaceport in Weipa.

The VIPs that gathered in Cairns included heads of the Australian Space Agency, delegates from NASA, the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM), as well as key business leaders and local, state, and federal politicians. All took part in Space Centre Australia's first North Queensland space workshop to become better informed of the project and the far-reaching economic benefits a spaceport will bring to the region and Australia as a whole.

Founder and CEO of Space Centre Australia, Mr. James Palmer, says the large-scale infrastructure project will be a substantial investment in the region and will create a completely new industry for FNQ that will help sustain not only the town of Weipa and surrounding regions long after its mining lifespan, but for many generations to come.

"As result of our commitment to advancing the Australian and International space industries, we are designed with a strong focus on collaboration. Space Centre Australia's facility will inject an estimated \$120 Million into the Far Northern economy during the initial construction phase and an estimated \$100 Million per annum thereafter. Up to 300 permanent jobs will be created once operational and 1000s of construction and support jobs throughout its development," said Mr. Palmer. The project is well advanced in its planning and has been in the works for the past five years.

Traditional owner groups also converged on the Civic Reception Room at Cairns Regional Council for the event as part of an ongoing collaboration with Space Centre Australia.

"The collaboration between Gunggandji Aerospace and Space Centre Australia is unprecedented in Australia. We're excited to unlock opportunities together in Far North Queensland for First Nations Communities", says Daniel Joinbee, Managing Director of Gunggandji Aerospace and proud descendant of the Gunggandji People of Yarrabah.

Four Australian recipients of an (AMCHAM) Endeavour Scholarship were also announced at the event, including 15 year old Mareeba State High School student, Toby Fealy. The first Far North Queensland student to ever be awarded such an honour. The scholarship recipients will have the exclusive opportunity of attending the Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama to be mentored by global industry leaders.

"I am literally over the moon to be given such a remarkable opportunity. I have always dreamt of working in space and now I get to work with the best in the business. To say I am excited is an understatement," said Toby Fealy.

Toby submitted an application to be considered for the scholarship and was awarded the position ahead of hundreds of other students around the world. His innovative application captured the hearts and minds of the Endeavour Foundation Scholarship Panel.

Over 100 participants from across the region took part in the days proceedings, including business, advocacy and economic development groups. Economic, employment and social benefits were discussed with many opportunities outlined.

“I feel privileged to be asked to be part of the workshop and to gain valuable insight into the importance of the lucrative impact such a significant infrastructure project and new industry will have on our entire business community. Today our eyes were opened up to the many possibilities that exist both initially as the facilities are constructed, and well into the future, giving our business community ample time to build capacity and develop new skills to deliver on this game changing project,” said workshop participant Cairns Chamber of Commerce CEO, Patricia O’Neill.

The current construction timeline of the spaceport will ensure the launch facility is ready to commence operations by the end of 2026 to accommodate small scale launch missions with large-scale launches by 2029.

“We intend to have the facility ready for large-scale Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) launch capabilities by the third quarter of 2029. There is still a lot of work to do here at home and internationally. It’s an exciting time for Far North Queensland and the many and varied industries who will benefit from the introduction of a space industry in the community. The site will be able to support commercial operations as well as future potential Defence needs. But what is most exciting is we will have a clear pathway for our next generation to learn on site and gain employment as part of the space industry.”

Today’s event was proudly supported by AusIndustry.

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