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Silica project FNQ first

Miner and Aboriginal corporation work together to manage plant

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TWO groups are forging a new model of business ownership in Cape York's resource rich mining sector.

Diatreme Resources and Hope Vale Congress Aboriginal Corporation will work together to manage a new silica mine planned for Cape Bedford, 20 minutes' drive from the indigenous community.

Diatreme Resources chief executive Neil McIntyre said up to 30 local people were expected to be employed during

construction of the mine and about 15 would be needed during its estimated 20-year operations.

"There are a lot of ancillary services needed for a mine like

this such as camp suppliers, fuel, tradesmen," he said.

"There will be about 75 to 100 peripheral jobs needed around supply, shipping and barge operations.

"We will aim to employ 100 per cent local people. Luckily, the mine site is close to Cape Flattery, the world's largest silica sand mining operation, owned by a Mitsubishi Corporation subsidiary, so there are already people who have been trained."

HVCAC general manager Ivan Deemal said he looked forward to being an equity partner in the operation.

"We're not just here to collect compensation, we will be driving the business. I think it's the first anywhere," he said.

His colleague, chairman

Harold Bowen, said the flow-on effects would hopefully en-

courage more clan groups to take an integrated approach to mine management.

"A lot of people in the community are looking for jobs and it's sad there is this urban drift out of the township. If you can create that opportunity and keep families together, it'll provide a sense of genuine hope," he said.

Mr McIntyre said the last exploratory drilling program had been finalised and one tonne of the product was being processed and verified for pu-

rity. Final commercial studies and approvals will also have to be completed before works begin, estimated to be in the next 12 months.

Clean, high-purity silica sand has become an increasingly strategic resource due to its usage in photovoltaic panels and other applications.

Increasing demand from Asia's infrastructure and automotive sectors for mineral sands has added to the positive outlook for Cape Bedford, which is favourably positioned to easily access these growing markets.



HIGH HOPES: Diatreme CEO Neil McIntyre and Hope Vale's Harold Bowen.