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## Silica mine proposal

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CASHING in on booming Asian demand for high-purity silica sand, emerging miner Diatreme Resources has revealed another step forward in the approval process for a project set to deliver significant investment and jobs for the Far North.

The proposed Galalar project is a new open-cut silica sand mine with onsite washing, gravity separation and stockpiling of the product at Cape Bedford, 20km north of Cooktown.

Up to 950,000 tonnes per annum of silica sand would be mined during a proposed mine life of 15 years.

The company, based in Brisbane, released the Initial Advice Statement and draft terms of reference for the project's environmental impact statement last month.

In March, the Department of Environment and Science approved a voluntary Environmental Impact Statement from Diatreme.

Diatreme chief executive Neil McIntyre said a comprehensive EIS was under way and would be the next State Government approval to be ticked off.

He said crews would drive in and out to the mine site and future workers were encouraged to re-establish

themselves at Cooktown, a 1.5 hour drive south of the mine site.

"I don't think we will cut ourselves from anyone wanting to work. People can come from Port Douglas and any

other areas to work," he said.

Mr McIntyre said the slated project would mean diversification from a tourism sector hit hard by COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The mine boss said the Galalar Silica Project could be the ticket to a successful post-COVID recovery based on the resources sector being largely unaffected by the coronavirus crisis.

The project is expected to generate 30-40 jobs in the construction phase and 60 in production.

An independent study revealed a total expenditure of \$23-24m during the construction phase and employment, including flow-on effects, would equal 110 full-time equivalent positions.

A lease covering an area of 542sq km would operate alongside the Mitsubishi Corporation subsidiary, Cape Flattery Silica Mines, and would supply premium-quality silica for the fast-growing Asian solar panel market.



**JOBS BOOST: Diatreme CEO Neil McIntyre says steps are under way for approval.**