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## SAND DEMAND

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### CITY BEAT CHRIS HERDE

#### SAND DEMAND

BELGIAN mining giant Sibelco has ramped up its Queensland presence with a deal to take a stake in Diatreme Resources and help develop its far northern silica sand project.

It has committed to invest almost \$50m, which will give it a 15 per cent stake in Diatreme and a 26.8 per cent stake in the company's Galalar and Northern Resource silica projects, which neighbour the world's biggest silica sandmine at Cape Flattery in Far North Queensland.

Brisbane-based Diatreme chief executive **Neil McIntyre** said the deal was a vote of confidence in the company and its strategy.

"Having access to

Sibelco's world-leading technical, processing and marketing expertise is a step change for Diatreme that propels us onto the global stage, enhancing the successful development of our projects," he said.

"Sibelco is a natural partner for us to unlock the value of our world-class silica sand deposits for the benefit of both companies and all of our stakeholders, including our First Nation partners and other local communities."

Sibelco is currently rehabilitating its leases at Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) after the state government officially ended sand mining on the island at the end of 2019 after the mining had been one of its main economic drivers since the 1950s.

A report from market research firm Imarc Group said the global silica sand market was expected to reach \$US20bn (\$28.8bn) by 2024 with the commodity needed in a wide variety of applications, from concrete and glass making to cosmetics, paint and coatings, chemicals production. It was also needed in mobile phones and silicon chips.