



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Migrants key to regional growth**

With unemployment at record lows and vacancies reported at record highs, local businesses are looking abroad to fill skilled positions.

The strength of the resource is luring Australian trained workers to mining regions where attractive wages are available for tradesmen and laborers. The strength of the local market means vacancies are often unfilled for months, or years at a time making it harder for local businesses to meet growing demand.

Townsville Enterprise is assisting local business find workers as the region's chief certifying body for skilled migration. Townsville Enterprise processed, a record 144 (94 457s and 50 sponsored migration) applications this year.

Townsville Enterprise Chief Executive Officer Glenys Schuntner said there should be no concerns that these workers are taking jobs from locals.

"Local businesses are crying out for skilled workers – these positions being filled by migrants are positions that have been advertised locally through employment organisations and newspapers. They're jobs that are genuinely begging to be filled."

"The overheated local market means a skilled migration application is a cost effective method of tackling the skills shortage."

Mike Carney Toyota is one local business looking to foreign shores to fill vacancies. Human resources manager Shaun McLaren said the mining industry's thirst for mechanics means local automobile services are competing for a smaller pool of available tradesmen.

"We spent 12 fruitless months trying to fill vacancies within Australia before looking to the Philippines. The big money lure of the mines means Mechanics are in short supply. We now have six Filipino Mechanics who have been here since February. They're proving to be great workers and are loving the North Queensland lifestyle," Mr McLaren said.

“Having these workers means we’ve been able to keep working through the skills shortage – rather than turning customers away.”

Both migration schemes require businesses to pay adequate wages, provide health insurance and a flight home in case of problems. Mike Carney Toyota also arranged housing for their workers – who are now looking to bring their families to Townsville.

“There was a lot of work involved in getting them here by completing all the paperwork and arranging accommodation for them in Australia but they have worked out really well. They have a great attitude to work, are very appreciative of working here in Australia and will always help out when required,” Mr McLaren said.

**ENDS**

**For more information contact Nathan Campbell on (07) 4726 2753 or 0434 182 765**