



18 JAN, 2023

## Sand miner set to expand in Far North

Cairns Post, Cairns

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### SANDHYA RAM

FNQ silica sand miner Diatreme Resources has indicated the potential for significant resource expansion at its Northern Silica Project (NSP), according to the latest drilling results.

The company said positive reports from infill and step out drilling at their Si2 deposit in 2022 confirmed the continuity and quality of silica sand in the dune system.

The NSP, which is Diatreme's second project in the region, is expected to be much bigger than their first project Galalar, as it is even closer to the Port of Cape Flattery, home of the world's biggest silica sand mine, allowing for easy shipping from port to market.

"The significant additional drilling and apparent extension to the Si2 dune evaluation is a great result, delivered for a second year in a row by the Northern Silica Project development team," Neil McIntyre, CEO of Diatreme, said.

"These are exciting times for Diatreme as we work to unlock this valuable, high-grade silica resource for the fast-growing solar photovoltaic (PV) industry, contributing to the world's decarbonisation drive while delivering genuine, long-lasting economic benefits to the FNQ community."

A detailed scoping study will be conducted by Diatreme, including economics and logistics of the Si2 dune system, and is expected to be delivered late in the first quarter of 2023, following which there was expected to be a clearer idea regarding employment opportunities around Cooktown, according to media representative Anthony Fensom.

"With Galalar, our first project, we had about 100 jobs with targeted Indigenous employment.

"With NSP, we have not got it defined as of yet but there will be new jobs once it is up and running in production, in the years to come," Mr Fensom said.

Working with Native Title representatives to ensure maximum community benefits while minimising environmental impacts is at the forefront of the NSP project for Diatreme, following accusations regarding lack of transparency in the past.

"The team has worked closely with Native Title representatives, providing mentoring and training to field teams, to ensure long-term benefits to the local community as per our commitment to Traditional Owners," Mr McIntyre said.

Diatreme reported hand auger drilling will be used initially, in keeping with their environmental protocol, to establish sand quality and

continuity while minimising site disturbance, with access gained by walking to sites.

Preliminary hand auger drilling at the southern end of the Casuarina dune system had produced average SiO<sub>2</sub> results, similar to those of the high purity silica sand within the Si2 dune system and is expected to continue into early 2023 during the wet season.

Initial environmental surveys for air core drilling in the area are also planned for 2023.



**The Northern Silica project in Far North Queensland**



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**These are exciting times for Diatreme as we work to unlock this valuable, high-grade silica resource.**

**NEIL MCINTYRE**



Working with Native Title representatives to ensure maximum community benefits while minimising environmental impacts is at the forefront of the NSP project for Diatreme. Picture: Supplied



Diatreme's silica sand resources will contribute to global decarbonisation by providing high-grade silica for use in the solar PV industry. Picture: Supplied