

Cairns Post

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BY Nick Dalton
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CENTRAL Queensland University is looking for more space than initially planned for the Cairns CBD campus it expects to open mid next year.

A high-level university delegation is in Cairns choosing the site, which will be revealed at the end of January.

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Vice-chancellor Professor Scott Bowman said the university had two final options – to buy a property with a budget of up to \$20 million or to lease.

He said the group of chancellor Rennie Fritchey, finance committee chairman Des Pearson, deputy vice-chancellor of finance Narelle Pearse, deputy vice-chancellor of international services Alastair Dawson and associate vice-chancellor Cairns and Far North Queensland Jodie Duignan-George had been inspecting properties during their two-day visit.

Prof Bowman said two sites had been short-listed with initial space requirements of 1700-2000sq m.

"The plan is for 1700- 2000sq m for the first two years but it may well be bigger than that," Prof Bowman said.

He said people were relocating to Cairns in January with 20-30 staff required in the first year to look after the first intake of students at the start of the second term.

Prof Bowman said the university's study centre in Cairns had 600 students and within the next two to three years another 500-600 would be added with the aim of 2000.

He said start-up costs had been estimated at \$5m with tens of millions of dollars to be spent over the next five years.

Prof Bowman said the aim was for half of the students to come from overseas, particularly China as well as the Middle East, India, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia.

"We will be leveraging the international brand that is Cairns," Prof Bowman said.

He said there was keen interest from Kuwait.

Courses to be offered included business, commerce and information technology and other niche areas not offered by James Cook University, such as their popular paramedical course, medical imaging, health, aged care and agriculture.

"Aviation is another, so we will be offering an aviation degree," Prof Bowman said. Research would be a component of the Cairns CBD campus, he said.

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