

We're mad about Holdens to the max



Proud: Andy Richards was so pleased with the comments he received over his superb 1964 EH Holden.
Picture: VERONICA SAGREDRO

WHEN you've been *Mad Max's* stunt driver you can handle just about anything, especially a day in the glorious tropical sun with a whole swag of fellow car nuts. Phil Brock, the brother of Holden legend Peter Brock and the man who steered Mel Gibson's black "interceptor" through its

most daring and hair-raising stunts in the original *Mad Max*, lapped up the sun and the attention yesterday from Holden loving Far Northerners at the Cairns All Holden Day. "Filming those *Mad Max* stunts was the hardest stunt work I ever did and you look back at it now and

go 'Hey that wasn't too bad' but I'm here now as a representative of motor sport and Holden," Mr Brock said. "Today is really terrific with so many enthusiasts here and it's just amazing the amount of time, effort and money they put into their cars - they really love them."

Holden fans obviously agreed with more than 1000 pouring in to Munro Martin Park from 9am yesterday. Some even made the trip from Mackay to see what treasures would be shown. Organiser Peter Thompson predicted an even bigger show in Cairns next year.

Lodge boss seeks help

THE owner of Tolga crisis accommodation centre Gecko Lodge has appealed for local businesses to help him keep operating. Steve Johnston said he would be evicted today if he could not find a private partner to help him refinance his Commonwealth Bank loan which would give him time to access \$170,000 in approved federal and state grants and loans. The centre provides crisis accommodation and teaches clients life-skills to help them get back in the workforce and off the streets. "If I can get over this hump (with the bank putting him in the hands of receivers) I can make Gecko Lodge pay its way - it can turn over \$100,000 a year," Mr Johnston said. **» To help, phone 0420 107 478.**

Role for art in reconciliation

THE Lockhart River Art and Cultural Centre has received the Established Business Award in the 2007 Reconciliation Awards for Business. It was the only Far Northern winner in the awards announced by Premier Peter Beattie. "The recipients have each contributed to reconciliation in their own unique way," Mr Beattie said. The Lockhart River Art and Cultural Centre began as an extra-curricular art initiative of the Lockhart River State School in the 1990s and now has an international profile for its Aboriginal art.

Mining boom brings gold

THERE'S gold in them there hills west of Cairns and a West Australian exploration company believes there's enough of it to fuel a \$120 million a year mining mini-boom over the next decade. The find by Kagara Zinc is the latest boost to the Far North's mining renaissance, led by the \$3 billion Aurukun bauxite mine proposed by Chinese mining giant Chalco. More than 10 exploration permits were granted by the State Government for smaller tenements at sites

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from Mareeba to Lockhart River in the three months up to March. Up to May 31, 2007, in the George-town and Mareeba mining districts there were 298 applications for exploration permits for minerals and 277 granted exploration permits for Minerals with 77 of these permits granted in the last 12 months. For the same area there are 199 mining lease applications and 488

granted mining leases with nine of these leases granted in the last 12 months. Recent deals between prospectors and native title holders are also fueling the renewed rush for minerals such as gold, copper, tin and zinc. Other commodities such as molybdenum, tungsten, antimony, nickel and mineral sands also are being investigated. Kagara executive director Joe Treacy told *The Cairns Post* its sites near Nychum could yield up

to 200,000 ounces of gold and 20,000 tonnes of copper annually. If further drilling confirms the positive early test results, the mine may start production as a joint venture with a mining company as early as April next year. "We think the results out of it's extremely positive and it's the best result we've had so far from Red Dome," he said. "We've still got more drilling to do, but the early signs are that it will be a very big development providing

significant employment and capital expenditure in the region. "The next 12 months will tell us if we've got a tiger by the tail." Kagara shares spiked to a five-month high of \$7 after the announcement last week. The renewal of mining activity in the Far North harks back to the region's pioneering days, sparked by the Palmer River gold rush more than a century ago. **» Our Say Page 12**

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