



press clip

# Top End tipped to boom

By NIGEL ADLAM

DARWIN will truly become the gateway to Asia within the next decade, an economist and futurist said yesterday.

Brian Haratsis said the city would benefit in four ways from a massive economic upswing in northern Australia over the next five to 10 years:

- A DRAMATIC** growth in freight ships leaving Australia;
- THE** marine services industry increasing markedly;
- A PERMANENT** pool of skilled labour being created by the arrival of Inpex and other industry; and
- REFRIGERATION** plants being built alongside the Alice Springs-Darwin railway to hold agriculture produce being exported to Asia.

Mr Haratsis, who runs strategic planning company MacroPlan, said the Territory had a bright economic future.

He said Australian shipping was predicted to increase by 250 per cent. "Darwin will increase its share markedly and become the true gateway to Asia."

He said the expansion of the oil and gas industry in northern Australia would lead to rapid growth of marine services.

And Darwin would get its "fair share" of the business.

Chief Minister Paul Henderson has said the industry supporting the oil and gas business is already

worth more than \$100 million a year.

Mr Haratsis said Inpex and other associated industries would draw many skilled workers to Darwin.

"And a fair number of them will stay for the lifestyle," he said. "That pool of skilled labor will attract even more industry."

"One of the reasons industry has been reluctant to set up in Darwin has been the shortage of labour."

Mr Haratsis said the expansion of the Ord irrigation scheme on the Western Australia-NT border would also benefit Darwin.

He said agricultural produce would be exported through Darwin Harbour after being trucked to refrigeration plants next to the railway.



**FUTURIST:** Brian Haratsis