



Gunning for success

Cairns firm chases the export dollar

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Business editor

CAIRNS manufacturer Battlefield Sports is looking forward to a jump in export sales as the US Free Trade Agreement comes into force today.

The business, which operates a small factory at Clifton Beach, sells 40 per cent of its Laser Skirmish combat guns in the US and Canada.

Manager Nicole Lander said the Free Trade Agreement would mean the end of a 5 per cent duty attached to its exports to that part of the world.

"It's just one less hurdle for our customers to get over," she said.

Battlefield Sports enjoyed a record sales month last month December following the launch of a new outlet in Los Angeles.

"Our business is a bit seasonal because a lot of North American customers want to launch their Laser Skirmish operations

in the lead up to summer --- January, February and March are generally the busiest.

"So we are really happy that December has been so good."

At Clifton Beach, the three fulltime staff assemble eight gun models.

Each weapon is worth between \$900-\$1900 and an average Laser Skirmish operation requires at least 40.

A cross between paint ball and laser tag, the activity is popular among outdoor enthusiasts as well as organisations looking for team-building exercises.

The guns are made of metal and feel like the real thing even though they only emit an infra-red beam.

Since making its first export in February 2002, Battlefield Sports has sold about 2500 guns.

The company opened an office in Los Angeles in November and plans to open another in London this year.

It was a finalist in this year's state

export awards and the Premier's Smart Awards.

Minister for State Development and Innovation Tony McGrady said the company had received nearly \$31,000 in development grants.

"This strategy was designed to help Queensland companies pursue research and development opportunities, create jobs and capture new export markets," he said.

The pastime is also growing in popularity in the United Kingdom and France.

The company has exported to 19 countries and its website receives about 25,000 hits a month.

A shipment of 114 guns has just gone to Singapore.

"Laser Skirmish has such universal appeal any developed country with a middle class just loves the game," Ms Lander said.



The game people play: Battlefield Sports staff member Zlatko Grcic puts together a skirmish weapon