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SUNSHINE COAST

The city where garbage bins are so last century

Businesses are showing interest in the futuristic revamp of Maroochydore's CBD, writes Jack Needham

It's not often that the chance to redevelop a city's CBD from scratch comes along, but that's just what's happening in Maroochydore, where a former golf course will become the largest greenfield development in Australia.

And it is not just a carbon copy of other towns - but instead the first in a new breed of properly 'smart cities'.

In fact, the city is set to be one of the most technologically advanced in the country and will have some national 'firsts'.

"It will offer unrivalled communications and transport connectivity, as well as planning certainty and competitively priced development choices," SunCentral Maroochydore chief executive John Knaggs said.

SunCentral is owned by the Sunshine Coast Council and is responsible for delivering the development.

According to Mr Knaggs, smart technology will manage street lighting, car parking and signage in the new city, and an automated waste collection system involving underground shuttles will collect garbage directly from homes and businesses - removing the need for garbage trucks and wheelie bins.

The underground Automated Waste

Collection System, which will use vacuum power to transport waste from apartments, businesses and public areas through a 6.5-kilometre network of underground shuttles to a waste centre, is the first of its kind in Australia.

Construction of the buildings in the core commercial precinct are expected to commence in the first quarter of 2018, but civil works, including the installation of the waste system has already started.

The new CBD will be built on a 53-hectare site, formerly a golf course, about 40 per cent of which will be parks, plazas and waterways.

The final project will incorporate 150,000 square metres of commercial gross floor area, 65,000 square metres of retail gross floor area and 2000 residential apartments.

Over its 20-year construction timeframe, 30,000 permanent jobs are expected to be created in the precinct.



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The new Maroochydore city centre is being built in anticipation of unprecedented population growth in the Sunshine Coast region.

Its population is set to grow from 350,000 to more than 550,000 by 2040, according to the state government's South East Queensland Regional Plan, with the outlook for business overwhelmingly positive.

Major infrastructure projects include a \$1.8 billion super-hospital complex and the planned construction of an international runway at Sunshine Coast Airport - 10 minutes' drive from the city - are helping to boost confidence in the future of the region, according to KPMG demographer Bernard Salt.

In his report, *The Activated City: Imagining the Sunshine Coast in 2040*, Mr Salt laid out a two-decade vision for the region's economy.

"In the 2020s, the Coast's entrepreneurial spirit will find expression through a surge in small to medium enterprises in health, technology, professional services, building and retail.

"By the 2030s, there will be flourishing businesses based on the Sunshine Coast that export to and that connect with South East Asia as comfortably as they connect with other parts of Australia.

"By 2040 there will be head offices of nationally significant businesses based

in Maroochydore, mostly in the services, technology and construction sectors."

The Sunshine Coast's population will not only get bigger, but also change in nature, according to Mr Salt, who describes the process as a "resetting of the social order".

"The result will be a Sunshine Coast that is not just bigger, but also younger, more highly educated and entrepreneurial, and as engaged with Asia as it is with the rest of Australia."

Mr Knaggs said that the SunCentral project was already contributing to an uplift in local employment, with a significant level of private sector interest.

"The first wave of private sector interest in the new CBD includes projects with a construction cost of more than \$400 million that would result in new job opportunities for local workers," he said.

Precincts 3 and 6, the first of the project, were released to market last year.

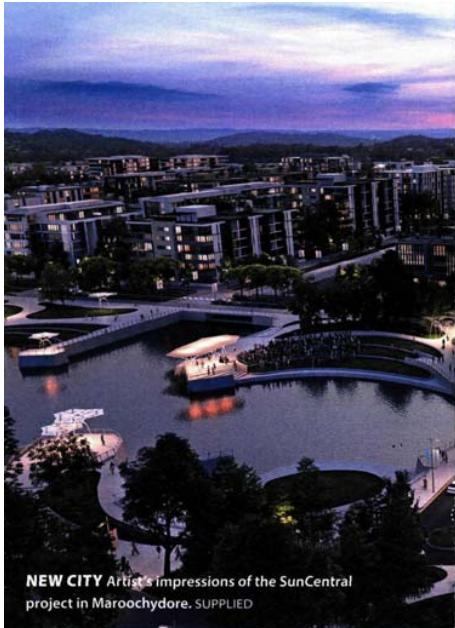
So far leasing is still in preliminary stages, although SunCentral confirms that pre-leasing inquiry is strong. 



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NEW CITY Artist's impressions of the SunCentral project in Maroochydore. SUPPLIED



FIRST STAGES

PRECINCT 3

Nine urban blocks and a civic square

- 50,000 sqm of commercial space
- 30,000 sqm of retail space
- 600 apartments

PRECINCT 6

Two urban blocks and a residential park and waterway

- 13,000 sqm of commercial space
- 10,000 sqm of retail space
- 250 apartments

