

Jewel in crown on the rise

QUEEN'S WHARF SET TO REVITALISE CBD

EXCLUSIVE
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FROM a hole in the ground to the jewel in the crown – the multibillion-dollar Queen's Wharf development is set to send Brisbane bolting into the future.

The Courier-Mail has been granted exclusive access to the CBD building site of the \$3.6bn Queen's Wharf.

While most of the structures under construction stand only a few levels above the CBD streets, the sheer size of the project means the work already completed is the equivalent of two 60-storey buildings. It is just over 18 months since work started on the game-changing project, with artist impressions of some of the development's signature features slowly transforming to reality.

Already 26 Olympic swimming pools' worth of concrete has been poured while 8700 tonnes of reinforced steel has been installed. Construction of the level five precinct is already under way, with work starting on a pedestrian bridge that will soar above the Riverside Expressway and across the Brisbane River.

The monumental operation of fitting the bridge segments above the expressway is expected to take just one day.

Already, 600 workers are involved in the construction phase, with that number expected to increase to some 1500 by the end of the year when the tradesmen arrive on-site.

Towers 2 and 3 The Star Grand will top out in January 2022, with Tower 1 and the Rosewood and Dorsett hotels to top out at 200m by the middle of next year.



Renderings of Queen's Wharf showing how it will transform Brisbane's CBD; and (inset left) project directors Dayne May of Multiplex and Simon Crooks of the Destination Brisbane Consortium on the site of the megacasinio in central Brisbane. Picture: John Gass

Nine historic buildings in the precinct will be incorporated into the development, including the existing hotel and casino structures which will form part of a new Ritz Carlton hotel and retain spaces, while the old Department of Primary Industries building, Brisbane's original Immi-

gration headquarters from 1865, is earmarked for a microbrewery. The first part of the development, featuring hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues, is on track to open late next year, delivering up to 8000 jobs and bringing an estimated 1.39m additional visitors to Brisbane.

The Destination Brisbane Consortium project, a joint-venture between Star Entertainment and Hong Kong-based Chow Tai Fook Enterprises and Far East Consortium Star is also transforming the company's Gold Coast casino into a mini-Manhattan of apartment and resort towers.

Star CEO Matt Bekier said Queen's Wharf would become one of Brisbane's most prized assets. "We're delivering a project that will change the face of Brisbane," he said. "It's a privilege to have that responsibility and we will deliver a tourism and entertainment desti-

nation of which Queenslanders can be justifiably proud. The vision is now becoming reality. From late next year this will be a must-visit location for locals, interstate and hopefully by then international visitors. At a time when we're looking to rebuild the economy, Queen's Wharf

will provide an economic stimulus led by employment opportunities." Destination Brisbane Consortium project director Simon Crooks said the precinct would be a huge focal point for the river city at a key moment in its history. "It is exciting times ahead

for Brisbane with the development now clearly on people's radar as it quickly takes shape," he said. "Already we've locked in a major retailer (DFS) in the Printery Building, with our attention turning to the heritage buildings and the more than 50 bars, restaurants and cafes within the precinct. Queen's

Wharf will light up the evenings and turn an under-utilised section of the CBD into a thriving entertainment hub." Star's Gold Coast expansion also continues apace, with a 53-storey Dorsett hotel and apartment tower on track to open early next year. EDITORIAL P50