

Mayor opens Highfields Village food precinct



Mayor Paul Antonio cuts the ribbon at the new food precinct at Highfields Village shopping centre, which has been developed by Mac Stirling, right, and his family company Lauder Pty Ltd.

The business operators who are occupying the new food precinct at Highfields Village Shopping Centre, are from left; Gordon and Annette Hutchison (Civil Video), Allanah and Murray Duncan (AbraKebab), Jeff Davis (Crackerjack Chicken), and Greg Death (Eagle Boys Pizza).

Highfields is facing a massive population increase over the next two decades, and the Highfields Village Shopping Centre is responding, even now, with the opening on the weekend of a new food precinct.

Principal of Lauder Pty Ltd, Mr Mac Stirling, said research had shown that there was demand for more stores selling convenience foods, and the company responded with a new precinct that includes four businesses.

The new shops are located on Highfields Road near the existing McDonalds store and Highfields Tavern.

Lauder began the Highfields Village project in 1997-98 with space for a supermarket and 14 speciality stores. The tavern was constructed at that time also.

Lauder completed a nearby housing development, and has since concentrated on expanding Highfields Village.

Woolworths became involved in 2005, taking over the supermarket from Action, and Craig's Hardware moved out of its store into a larger new building of 1000 square metres.

The supermarket is also being expanded from 2600 square metres to 3800 square metres, providing Woolworths with space for a full line supermarket.

The new shops are tenanted by Crackerjack Chicken, AbraKebab, and Civic Video, The fourth store is to be occupied by Eagle Boys Pizza, which will relocate from the main part of the shopping centre in late July.

Mayor Paul Antonio, who cut the ribbon at the official opening of the precinct on Saturday, said the investment in new facilities by people like the Stirling family was critical for the development of both Highfields and the community.

Mayor Antonio said the Highfields area would continue to grow, and research showed that by 2026, the population of Highfields would expand by 78 percent.

"Presently it is about 11,000 and is expected to become more than 20,000 in the next 14 years.

- Miles Noller reporting

Life comes before trees

It's time for a fresh review to examine and re-evaluate priorities. It's time for safety and the preservation of human life to be the number one priority.

Since the planned start date of the Hampton to Geham stretch of the New England Highway in 2009 (after a full Road Safety Audit in 2006), the time taken and cost to upgrade the stretch of highway has literally blown out. The vital upgrade has been hampered by protests from minority groups and ministerial backflips, resulting in continued plan redesigns, departmental reviews, an independent review (with ongoing RPS Group (formerly Conics) representation throughout each stage of the project), a cultural heritage report, protected plants clearing permits, environmental certification and the engagement of arborists and ecologists (to name but a few) to undertake and collect data for input into the final design.

With recent reports suggesting the LNP Government plans to scrap upgrades to the depleted Warrego Highway near Charlton, citing its inability to fund the project, and the example of the cost blow out of the New England Highway between Hampton and Geham, which is yet to be completed and final costing determined, lives continue to be lost on our highways. It's time to prioritise and examine the use of public resources.

It's time to ensure that the preservation of human life comes before trees, ensuring that every cent possible is spent on vital infrastructure - in a timely manner.

Investment in vital infrastructure like the Warrego Highway and the Toowoomba Bypass can no longer be put in the too hard basket. - Heather Thomson, Palmtree.

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Big improvements ahead for sports grounds

Highfields' appeal as a popular residential area continues unabated and is matched by a similar rise in the number of sporting clubs and active participants.

Toowoomba Regional Council recognises the need to upgrade fields and facilities to accommodate expansion and is eager to provide a revitalised precinct which appeals to all residents.

A number of exciting development works will continue at the Kuhls Road Sports Reserve in the coming months, including drainage on the eastern field to divert minor storm water flows around the playing field, an underground irrigation system to the western field, which will be connected to the on-site bore, removal of understory weeds and remnant vegetation (including a small number of trees) on the southern end of the western field to create additional useable area for sport, and installation of additional lighting towers to improve the lighting quality on the western field.

Cr Sue Englart said the works would complement the proposed landscape redevelopment of Kuhls Road Sports Reserve.

She said the focus now was on seeking funding for the construction of a new canteen/storage structure for the western field and the

realignment of existing sports field layouts.

"It will also see the provision of a variety of both passive and active recreational opportunities and the upgrade of the two existing sports fields.

"Providing additional recreational facilities and rehabilitating the park's natural features offers opportunities to increase its visual and environmental appeal and to encourage wider use across the community."

Cr Englart said a system of pedestrian paths, avenue planting between sports fields, additional car parking and the use of re-vegetation areas to provide screening to adjacent properties were included in the draft master plan (which can be viewed at <http://www.toowoombarc.qld.gov.au/about-council/newspublications/news-releases/7353-chance-to-comment-on-sports-fields.html>). Safety will be addressed at both sports facilities by separating vehicle and pedestrian traffic, more centrally located picnic shelters or playground facilities, and the use of clear-trunked canopy trees to maintain sight safety lines.

"At all times during the works, council will take extra care to minimise interruptions to sporting field use and ensure safe access for the recreation activities of the wider community," Cr Englart said.

Morning tea thanks

The members of QCWA Goombungee Branch thank all who supported The Biggest Morning Tea on June 6. There was a large crowd and we are pleased to announce a cheque for \$768.80 will be sent to Cancer Council Queensland. This amount was raised from raffles, entry fees, donations and sales of goods. Everyone who attended enjoyed the morning. If you would like to help our branch with community events or join in on our craft mornings and Devonshire Tea mornings, please phone Helen 46965903 or Barbara 46965132 for further details. - Barbara Harth, branch treasurer.

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