



City's soaring skyline

Developers are aiming sky high with new projects that will change the shape of the city, writes Margaret de Silva



Many more Brisbane residents will find it easier to have city views with a host of new sky-high developments opening in 2012. The new developments range from high-end apartments and commercial precincts to low-cost housing and are set to reshape the city – and there are more on the way over the next five years.

Five major developments in the inner-city are scheduled for completion this year, while several high-rises have been approved and will begin construction. Brisbane's tallest new building, Soleil on Adelaide Street, is the first

to open in March. Standing at 74 floors high and soaring 234 metres, the Meriton development will be home to 464 luxury one, two and three-bedroom apartments. The tower has become a beacon of construction in the city, visible from suburbs as far as Morningside, Newmarket and Gordon Park, while views from the top stretch to Moreton Bay.

The building is as tall as Sydney's tallest residential building – Meriton's World Tower – but it won't retain the title of Brisbane's tallest for long. The same developer is also building the even taller Infinity apartment complex at Herschel Street, North Quay, which will soar to 262 metres and have more than 500 apartments when completed in 2014.

The \$700million One One One Eagle Street commercial development by the GPT Group is another high-rise reshaping Brisbane's skyline. Designed by Cox Rayner Architects, the 44-level building was inspired by nature, with steel concrete "branches" binding the structure together. It has a 6-star Green Star Design rating from the Green Building Council of Australia and a 5-star Australian Building Greenhouse Rating. It will also house Philip Johnson's new bistro, One Eleven, opening in April.

The opening of One One One Eagle Street, along with a 27-level office block at Ann Street, in the first half of the year will see more than 100,000 square metres of new commercial space added to the CBD market – supply that is desperately needed to attract industry to Brisbane, according to Brisbane City councillor Amanda Cooper.

Cr Cooper chairs council's Neighbourhood Planning and Assessment Committee and she says development in the CBD is constrained by the winding Brisbane River and heritage precinct in Spring Hill. Despite the failure of skyscrapers such as the now-defunct Vision building and

office space is still strong from the mining boom and associated industries, particularly among engineering and legal firms.

"We're very keen to keep pursuing commercial development," she says. "We think our city is uniquely placed to service the mining industry and we really want to encourage industry to come to Brisbane and establish headquarters here because it's a great place to live and invest."

The new Brisbane Supreme Court and District Court complex also opens its doors mid-year, creating a new legal precinct that links with the existing Brisbane Magistrates Court. The precinct will occupy an entire block between George, Roma and Turbot Streets and the \$570million project includes 60,000 square metres of floor space over 19 floors.

Outside the CBD Cr Amanda Cooper names South Brisbane and Fortitude Valley as the main hotspots for development. Mirvac's Park Apartments at Newstead Riverpark opens mid-year and is part of the first stage of the \$1billion Waterfront urban revitalisation. The Park Apartments will provide 102 apartments, house six retail outlets and eventually open onto a five-hectare park.

Other developments under construction in



the area include FKP's Gasworks precinct at Newstead and Laing O'Rourke's mixed use M&A development at McLachlan and Ann Streets.

In South Brisbane, Brisbane Common Ground is a partnership between the State and Commonwealth governments, developer Grocon and non-profit housing group Micah Projects. The Hope Street complex will provide 146 apartments for social housing tenants, with onsite support.

Also in South Brisbane, the revamped Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre is scheduled to open this year and council recently approved a 30-storey apartment block in Edmonstone Street.

New suburban developments too, represent council's vision for future development. For example, the new Indooroopilly neighbourhood plan will allow complexes up to 20 storeys around public transport hubs and shopping centres.

Cr Cooper says higher density living is necessary to cope with growth. "We're still keeping large areas of the city intact with the traditional backyard suburban living but focusing on more development around those centres where people can have a different type of experience in terms of living and working potentially right in that location."

PLANS BEYOND 2012

- Infinity – Meriton's 81-level apartment block will be Brisbane's tallest building in 2014
- 111+222 – Bellbergia's 90-storey hotel and residential building and 34-storey office block on the old Vision site
- 480 Mary Street – Grocon's 37-storey office tower planned for the failed Trilogy site
- 103 Mary Street – A new 32-storey hotel to replace an existing office block
- M&A Fortitude Valley – Laing O'Rourke's McLachlan and Mary Street development opens 2013
- Gasworks – Stage two of FKP's Newstead precinct finishes early 2013
- The Milton – Construction on FKP's 298-apartment complex in Milton starts this year
- The Hudson – Construction on FKP's Albion Flour Mill renewal begins mid-year.
- Edmonstone Street – Aria Property Group plans a 30-level apartment block at South Brisbane