

Businessweek

WITH
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Shops to be relocated temporarily while DFO Cairns receives \$10m renovation

Mall revamp in store

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A \$10 million facelift of a Cairns retail haven is due to begin next week.

Nine years after it opened, DFO Cairns will be overhauled to "bring it into line with modern consumer expectations".

It comes after Brisbane company Sentinel Property Group paid \$40 million for the Westcourt shopping centre in April last year.

A "mall straightening project" is to begin on February 15, with the aim of creating a "better flow of foot traffic" and a more appealing space for retailers and customers.

The revamped mall section will feature a new customer information kiosk.

"While, there will be some temporary relocation of retailers during the mall reconfiguration, the end result will be a bigger and better environment for our retailers and shoppers," said Sentinel managing director Warren Ebert.

"Total foot traffic at DFO Cairns has continued to rise since we took over the centre and we are committed to ongoing improvements for the benefit of all."

The mall straightening project, expected to take two months, will be followed by the construction of a new outdoor dining and entertainment precinct.

This will include a children's area, a large outdoor screen and an array of cafes and restaurants.

The new precinct - flagged for mid-2017 completion - is also being touted as a potential hub for live music and market events.

Mr Ebert said "strong" leasing



BIG IMPROVEMENTS: The planned facelift of Cairns DFO includes the construction of a new outdoor dining and entertainment area.

interest had been received from both local and national businesses.

"New retailers continue to be attracted to DFO Cairns as a result of our clear vision ... its unique position in the Cairns market and its strong future

growth prospects, fuelled by the region's resurgent tourism sector," he said.

"We thank shoppers for their patience during the upcoming construction period and we are focused on keeping centre disruptions to a mini-

mum to deliver an even better shopping experience."

Sentinel owns and manages a national property portfolio valued in excess of \$1 billion.

The company's purchase of the DFO Cairns site was its largest ever retail acquisition.

Cairns Chamber of Commerce chief executive Deb Hancock welcomed the Mulgrave Rd shopping centre's \$10 million upgrade.

"The capital investment being demonstrated by Sentinel Property Group is a sign of

confidence from a very large retail property manager," she said.

"We are delighted to see that Cairns is continuing to be recognised as a strong regional investment option," Ms Hancock said.

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