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WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEKEND



BUSINESS

Centre starts transformation

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Sentinel Property Group managing director Warren Ebert has revealed a wide-ranging plan to make the centre a key shopping destination for both

residents and tourists. Mr Ebert said the group believed that the \$39.7 million paid for the 8.15ha property was a bargain with the replacement cost of the land and buildings valued at \$140m. He said work had started on repairing driveways and parking areas, painting outside furniture and new signs. - **Page 5**



BIG PLANS: Sentinel Property Group managing director Warren Ebert says about \$10 million will be spent on the DFO shopping centre in the next year. Picture: ANNA ROGERS

DFO shopping centre starts transformation

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A MAJOR transformation of the DFO Cairns shopping centre is under way as its new owners seek to improve the value and attraction of the Westcourt property.

Sentinel Property Group managing director Warren Ebert has revealed a wide-ranging plan to make the centre a key shopping destination for both residents and tourists.

He told the *Weekend Post* that:

- Big box retailers wanted to build stand-alone premises on the Mulgrave Rd boundary.
- Operators were lining up

WHAT'S IN STORE AT DFO CAIRNS

- New names to look out for
- Sideways Surf Outlet – opening mid-May
- TJ Maxx (rebranded Top Secret) – date TBA
- Big box retail brands
- earmarked for Mulgrave Rd boundary – TBA
- Child care centre western boundary – TBA
- Seven vacancies exist out of 73 tenancies

to operate a childcare centre on vacant land on the western boundary.

- New tenants were being signed up.
- Extensive market researching of customers who did not shop at DFO Cairns.
- Establishing a VIP lounge for tourist customers.
- Fresh fruit and produce

stalls outside Coles supermarket.

- New indoor-outdoor dining offerings.
- A new highly experienced centre manager to be appointed.

Mr Ebert said the group believed that the \$39.7 million paid for the 8.15ha property was a bargain with the replace-

ment cost of the land and buildings valued at \$140m.

He said work had started immediately repairing driveways and parking areas, painting outside furniture and new signs, especially directional.

Mr Ebert said DFO would tap into the growing tourist market with a VIP tourist lounge for those who had booked out of their hotels and needed somewhere to store luggage while they shopped.

Tenants that appealed to Chinese customers would be pursued. He said currently they only visited Ralph Lauren and Royal Doulton and then left the centre.

The former gym area near

the Dick Smith store would be turned into an indoor-outdoor dining precinct.

Mr Ebert said big box retailers wanted to build their own premises fronting Mulgrave Rd.

He said shoppers who did not visit DFO would be surveyed to find out why.

"We are installing free Wi-Fi to increase the dwelling time," Mr Ebert said.

Mr Ebert said the group planned to spend about \$10m on the centre in the next year.

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