

Investors on board for Maroochy's makeover

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Leading local car dealer Garry Crick has bought into the development, with construction due to start early next year on a Mercedes dealership close to the Harvey Norman complex.

National retirement village operator Living Choice has also bought six hectares in Sunshine Cove where it plans to build a village for up to 500 residents.

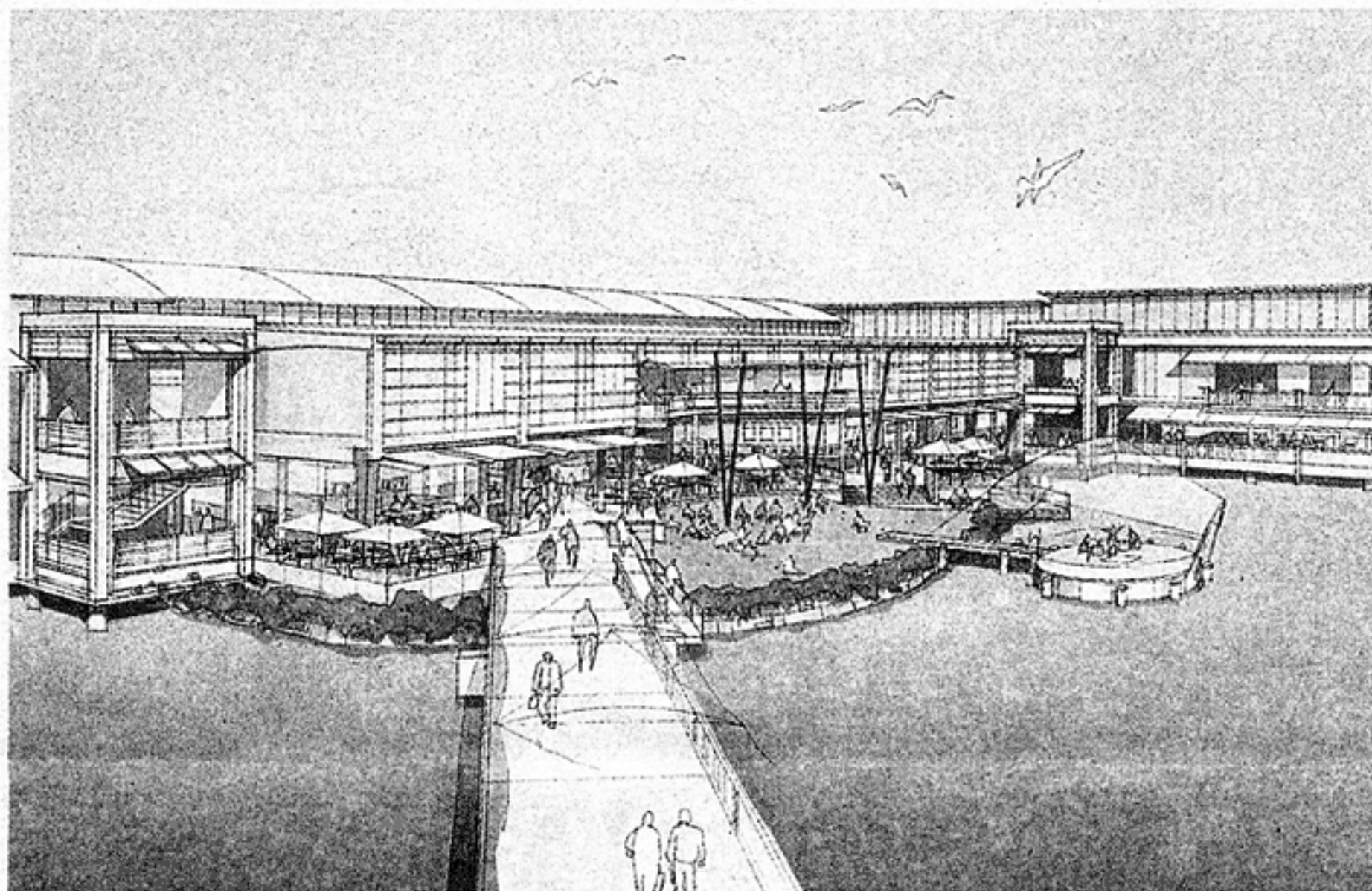
And earlier this year, Reed Property Group paid a reported \$30 million for 8.5ha in Sunshine Cove where it plans to create a residential and mixed-use commercial development.

Speaking at the Maroochy Chamber of Commerce AGM on Thursday night, managing director Ken Reed said through its Sunshine Cove project and the redevelopment of the Big Top Shopping Centre (to be called metro), Reed had \$1.6 billion worth of investment planned for Maroochy over the next 10 years.

Mr Reed said the company planned to lodge a development application for metro in the near future, adding major projects needed to happen "to retain Maroochy's designation as the Coast's principal activity centre".

Another major player in Maroochy is Sunshine Plaza manager Lend Lease which recently unveiled its \$240 million plaza extension, the company's Queensland development manager Brad Meyers saying he hoped construction would start early next year.

He said the project, which will add 17,000sq m of retail space (100 new shops) to the existing 74,000sq m on the Sunshine Plaza site, was expected to create 1400 jobs during construction and 850 direct retail jobs on completion, with a multiplier effect of 6000 jobs in the wider



SHOPPING UPGRADE: An artist's impression of the proposed \$240 million next stage of Sunshine Plaza. PHOTO: LEANNE JEFFREY

community.

The expansion will be largely centred on land on the Plaza Parade side of the centre, presently occupied by Woolworths and a dozen or so other shops including Office Works, Kleenmaid and Camera House.

All of them except Woolies will be pulled down and replaced by a two-storey complex with elevated connections across Cornmeal Creek to the Plaza proper. The project will also include construction of a four-or-five storey carpark on vacant land fronting Plaza Parade, to provide an additional 1400 parking spaces.

Other key elements to Maroochy's transformation will be the relocation of the Horton Park Golf Course out of town and subsequent redevelopment of the land by investment

bank Babcock & Brown, that project likely to rival the investment at Sunshine Cove, and also the construction of a \$48 million health hub by the state government on a 20ha site between the proposed Harvey Norman development and Sunshine Motorway.

Maroochy will be the focus for employment, government services and civic and entertainment facilities

The projects already underway or well advanced will no doubt be joined by numerous others once Mar-

oochy council's structure plan for the area encompassed by its Major Development Area in Maroochy is finalised.

Also speaking on Thursday night, council's strategic planning officer Simon Kichington said the structure plan, to be presented to council next month, would encourage the development required to underpin Maroochy's status as the Sunshine Coast's Principal Activity Centre.

He said the plan would identify the need for an additional 110,000sq m of retail space and an additional 130,000-200,000sq m of office space in the medium term.

The Major Development Area takes in Sunshine Cove, Horton Park Golf Course, Sunshine Plaza, the Big Top Shopping Centre

site, Aerodrome Road and Sugar Road/Maud Street.

"As the Principal Activity Centre, Maroochy will be the focus for employment, government services and civic and entertainment facilities," Mr Kichington said.

"A lot of investment is required to make the projected population growth sustainable and council understands the need to get these key sites happening."

Mr Cassidy said people disillusioned with how long it had taken to get central Maroochy moving would be reassured by what was happening.

"The big message is, there has been an awful lot of planning, but now we're seeing that translate into actual work on the ground," he said.