

Techne wins approval

Nick Lenaghan

Techne Development has won planning approval for a \$120 million office building on a landmark site in Geelong, the second-largest city in Victoria.

The project will redevelop the prominent Carlton Hotel on Malop Street, in the Geelong central business district, into 18,000 square metres of commercial space.

Heritage elements of the historic hotel will be retained in the nine-level redevelopment.

A planning permit was issued just five weeks after Techne lodged its application.

A redevelopment wave is making its way through the Geelong CBD as the municipality embraces a number of major government tenants.

The new national headquarters of the National Disability Insurance Agency will be established in Geelong while WorkCover is also moving to the city.

"The Carlton will be a significant urban symbol of the ongoing transformation of the Geelong economy, employment profile and CBD," said Michael Vickers-Willis, managing director of Techne.

Designed by architects Woods

Bagot, the Techne project will be competing with other landlords and developers to house the NDIA and WorkCover tenancies.

Mr Vickers-Willis said Geelong was now emerging as a national centre for insurance and rehabilitation and support services.

Construction at The Carlton project could begin by mid-2015, ready for occupancy in late 2016.

The pace of development in Victoria's second city is already picking up. Last week Melbourne-based fund manager Quintessential Equity, lodged plans for a \$90 million office building, also on Malop Street.

Designed by architects peckvonhartel, a 12-level office will be developed at 1-7 Malop Street. The project integrates the historic Dalgety & Co building with a new tower providing 13,500 square metres of A-grade office space.

Geelong mayor Darryn Lyons has said the city's action plan to boost activity and employment in the city centre is yielding results.

"With NDIA, WorkCover and TAC [Transport Accident Commission] in the heart of Geelong in the next five years, the city will become a centre of excellence for disability and insurance providers," he said last week.



Artist impression of the \$120m Techne project in Geelong.

IOOF sells A-grade Toowong tower

Matthew Cranston

Listed financial services group IOOF Holdings is selling its fully leased office building in Toowong, Brisbane to a local private family company for \$21.5 million.

The A-grade tower is the current Australian headquarters for Alliance Global Assistance.

The sale, negotiated by Colliers International's Jason Lynch and Tom Phipps achieved an initial yield of 8.76 per cent.

Located at 74 High Street, the modern, 10-year-old building features 4431 square metres over four levels and is occupied until January 2019.

Colliers International's Capital Markets and Investment Services marketed the property in an expression of interest campaign that attracted over 170 inquiries.

The type of asset 74 High Street represents has been in strong demand in Brisbane where vacancy rates are lower in fringe locations than in the city centre.

Mr Lynch said the interest



At 74 High Street, the 10-year-old building features 4431 sq m of space.

to syndicators or funds with a five-to-seven-year investment horizon whose returns will be impacted by the lease expiry in 2019," Mr Lynch said.

Colliers' Tom Phipps says Toowong remains one of the city's strongest fringe office markets, with an average vacancy rate of 4.8 per cent over

daily. Toowong train station, bus interchange, and City Cat facilities are all within easy walking distance," Mr Phipps said.

The property provides long-term redevelopment options, with the 1827 sq m site currently underdeveloped, given the maximum permitted building height limit of 20 storeys.

Raiders' office up for grabs

Matthew Cranston

Raiders Group – an affiliated company of the rugby league club – is in discussions with a Sydney-based financial services and investment group to sell an office tower in Brisbane for a price close to \$28 million.

The league club purchased the building from Brisbane property tycoon Kevin Seymour in 2010 for about \$26 million.

The 10-storey building at 10 Felix Street sits in Brisbane's Golden Triangle, and is close to Waterfront Place and the Eagle Street Pier restaurant precinct. Current tenants include National Storage and the NSW Chamber of Commerce.

Raider Group chief executive Simon Hawkins declined to comment on the current discussions.

The Raiders Group has an extensive portfolio of real estate in Queensland, including the freehold of major sporting clubs in Toowoomba and Logan. The group scooped up private Brisbane investor Nick Girdis's Park Road office property in the inner-city suburb of Milton for