



# Foreshore set to shine

By ANDREW POTTS

A COMMUNITY space to rival Brisbane's King George Square will be the centrepiece of the long-delayed second stage of the \$89.5 million Surfers Paradise foreshore redevelopment, which is expected to begin within months.

The Gold Coast City Council has approved \$25 million of funding to fast-track the project.

The council endorsed the funding as part of a \$100 million infrastructure stimulus package, which will be funded through a long-term treasury loan to be paid off with developer contributions.

The project has been in limbo since August last year when the embattled Raptis Group pulled out of the \$750 million Iluka Development.

It will follow stage one of the foreshore upgrade, featuring the Juniper Group's \$850 million Soul development, a retail precinct which is expected to almost

double the number of shops and restaurants in the area.

It is expected to be completed by Christmas.

Area councillor Susie Douglas said the project would bring jobs to the Gold Coast's building industry, which has been shaken by the global economic crisis.

"I am very happy this project is happening," she said.

"Now is a good time to do this project because we can stimulate the economy by creating more jobs and building a new tourist product which we will be able to use to promote ourselves.

"This will drive more tourism and bring people back here because everyone likes to see change and it is a long time since we have had any on the Esplanade."

The Surfers Paradise Esplanade will be re-routed as part of the development's second stage, which will take place between Cavill Avenue and Hanlan Street.

Cr Douglas said the overpass between the beach and Centro shopping centre would make way for an 'urban plaza'.

"The beachfront plaza will be widened to create an event space like no other," she said.

"It will be almost as big as King George Square and will be able to house several thousand people for events right on the beach.

"It will be the Gold Coast's civic square and we will see the work simultaneously begin with that in front of the Soul development."

Surfers Paradise MP John-Paul Langbroek said he welcomed the development.

"It will hopefully mean a rejuvenation of the precinct at the end of the mall which could be a world class entry to the beach," he said.

"It would be great to have a huge entrance to the beach for people to mill around rather than the narrow area which funnels to the beach."



**NEW LOOK** ... an impression of the Soul development in Surfers.