



The Peppers Piers Resort . . . tourist resorts are adding glamour and appeal to Hervey Bay

# Hervey Bay a new coast boom town

A BOOMING tourism industry and a barrage of new developments will see Hervey Bay's population double within the next 12 years, experts forecast.

The seaside town on the Fraser Coast now has a population of more than 50,000 and experts expect the number to skyrocket, thanks to the continuing popularity of the 'sea-change' lifestyle.

Property and social analyst Bernard Salt's latest KPMG report on growth trends reveals that Hervey Bay is the fastest-growing city in Australia after recording a 6.5 per cent increase in 2005-06.

Underpinned by the sugar cane industry, the economy of Hervey Bay is also benefitting from a tourism boom and the region is now attracting more than 1.5 million visitors each year.

Overseas visitors also favour the Fraser Coast, with an extra 21,000 travelling to the region in 2007, pushing the total number for the 12 months to 204,000.

A range of transport options has allowed easy accessibility to the Fraser Coast, three-and-a-half hours north of Brisbane.

Direct flights now operate from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and there is also a Queensland tilt-train service.

Hervey Bay City Council manager of tourism and economic management Larry Monk says Hervey Bay is proving a popular

overseas visitor destination.

"Hervey Bay-Fraser Coast is now the sixth most popular destination for international visitors heading to Queensland," said Mr Monk.

"The area's exposure, especially in international markets, will continue to increase as more resorts come on line."

The redevelopment of Hervey Bay Airport headlines an infrastructure program, with the \$13 million revamp and runway extension now completed and work on the Hervey Bay Airport Industrial park begun.

The \$100 million industrial

Buyers say they want to get in early before Hervey Bay becomes an exclusive destination

estate, a joint venture of private enterprise and Hervey Bay City Council, will feature 78 lots over 42ha and, when completed, will inject about 1000 jobs into the Fraser Coast economy.

The retail industry is also experiencing major growth with 20,000sqm of new shop floorspace approved to date, and a further 60,000sqm in development applications before the council.

Some of Australia's retail kings have expressed interest in establishing or expanding their retail presence into Hervey Bay, includ-

ing Harvey Norman, Woolworths, Aldi and Big W.

But property development dominates the rejuvenated Fraser Coast community with construction now accounting for about a fifth of all industry in Hervey Bay.

Asset Loans Investments is one of several developers cashing in on this rapid growth.

Its \$32 million beachfront residential resort, Sea, was approved by the Hervey Bay City Council last week.

Managing director Russell Percival said the decision to build the resort was based on the potential of the area.

"Hervey Bay is a fantastic place and council and private enterprises are doing a great job in working together strategically to ensure all aspects of a successful city are covered," he said.

"What attracted us to Hervey Bay was a great economy boasting a seaside lifestyle with a great town planning scheme in place.

"Our buyers so far are telling us that they want to get in early before Hervey Bay becomes one of Australia's most sought after and exclusive destinations."

Sea has now sold nine homes off the plan and expects the strong sales performance to climb despite recent interest rate rises.

"Hervey Bay is a real investment which I can only see improving as it is transformed into a key Queensland destination and city," said Mr Percival.