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# Downtown utopia

The government has committed to funding the infrastructure for Bowden Village and the release of development lots may begin as soon as the end of this year.

Most people are familiar by now with the Rann Government's desire to see Bowden Village, the development on the former Clipsal site at the top of Port Road, emerge as a benchmark medium density community. The vision is a place where a healthy cross section of the population will choose to live, creating a vibrant city fringe suburb with the same character and appeal as an established area like Norwood.

For the Land Management Corporation (LMC) it has been a long haul of consultation and planning but CEO Wayne Gibbings is confident the right foundations have been laid through an exhaustive process of urban planning and comparison with similar developments both interstate and overseas.

"I am quite confident that it will become a destination," he said.

Demolitions for stage one are due to finish soon. "We are well advanced for the engineering design and the services for the roads and the public space and we are very hopeful we will have work commencing on the sub-division probably towards the end of July, early August. We are intending to offer the first lots by the end of the year."

Speaking to Gibbings, it is clear that the government has a lot riding on the outcome of Bowden Village and each step towards the project's realisation is being carefully managed.

"It has taken us a couple of years to get to this stage," he said. "The announcement recently was us going back to Cabinet and saying this is what we think needs to be incorporated, this is how much it is going to cost all up and for Cabinet to sign off on that full approval so we can get going on the whole project."

With that done, the focus will soon shift to built form, a subject that has not been up for discussion until now. Gibbings predicts the first residents could be hiring moving vans in early 2013. So just what will they be moving in to?

"Principally the product will be apartments, ranging in height from four to eight stories," Gibbings said. "The European model is what we want to stick to, that more human scale of height."

"We have put a lot of effort into designing the streets. They're going to be local streets, they're not going to be roads. They're what we call shared streets, so the motor vehicle, the bicycle, the pedestrian will have equal access. We make no apologies. This is going to be a walkable community," Gibbings said, acknowledging that the term 'walkable community' has now officially taken the place of the once feted Transit Oriented Development or TOD.

Gibbings is unwilling to say much about what the housing in Bowden will eventually look like.

"The LMC's role is to do the demolition, put in all the services, new roads, electricity, water, sewer, to create the open space. We will be creating super lots to purchase. They (developers) will then develop the product that conforms to our urban design guidelines."

These guidelines are going to be critical to the outcomes at Bowden. What they demand and how well they are enforced will make a huge difference to the final look and feel of the area. As you might expect, not all developers welcome strict rules.

Bowden Village will be the first major government development to proceed under the aegis of the state's newly installed Integrated Design Commissioner, Tim Horton, who will be just one of a number of carefully chosen members of a design review panel that will have ultimate control over the buildings in the development.

"We employed Hassell and Parsons Brinckerhoff over the past couple of years and Hassell has been leading the way on the urban design guidelines with input from other urban specialists around Australia. They are very tightly controlled and when a developer puts up a plan they will have to conform to those guidelines. That plan will then come to a design review panel and be signed off by them before (the developer) can lodge plans with the authorities. We think that will ensure we get both consistency and really good design outcomes.

"I think we all recognise that there has been development in Adelaide where the built form outcomes have disappointed," Gibbings said.

Hassell architect David Homburg agrees that the guidelines will be essential to creating a coherent environment for the new residents.

"When you're doing master plans you write a set of urban design guidelines that talk about building heights, the sort of things that you see in a normal council development," Homburg said. "But they go a lot further, talking about natural light, ventilation. They talk about the feel of the place and how it will be experienced opposed to just focusing on the look of it."

"I think that is the crucial thing. We are trying to create places that people want to live in, they feel good, they are attractive. It's much more than the built form, it's about the experience. That is probably the most crucial thing."

Homburg is also excited about the possibility of Bowden stimulating an entirely

new style of architecture for Adelaide. As the first medium density development the city has embarked upon, he sees it as an opportunity for designers to come up with a unique design for what he called "The Adelaide apartment".

"I hope that we actually find an apartment type that is uniquely Adelaide," he said.

"Our climate is different to the East coast, so for me it would be apartments that have nice deep shaded balconies that you can actually occupy during the warmer weather. Most of our buildings have that solid quality to them and we can create a type of apartment which is based on that."

"I don't think it is about finding a house form we can blow up into an apartment. It is about finding out about the way we can live here and translating that into a building. What I hope our design community will do is start with the principles of what an Adelaide apartment should be and develop up a project that is actually quite unique in an Australian context."

A major part of the context for the Bowden Village site is its location on the edge of the city parklands. Part of the funding the LMC has secured is earmarked for work on the parklands that front Park Terrace.

"We are working very closely with the City Council. We see that as an integral part of the Bowden development. Three thousand people will be living and working there and having parklands that meet their requirements is important," Gibbings said.



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“One of the major ideas we put to Cabinet is that we need a new pedestrian and cycling bridge over Park Terrace. Eventually there will be a ‘greenway’ to Port Adelaide and you will be able to cycle all the way into the city.”

Just when this bridge will materialise has not yet been determined, along with another piece of important infrastructure change, the undergrounding of the railway.

“We haven’t quite determined when exactly that (the bridge) will occur. I would say it is not going to be in the first year. We have to work out how it incorporates into the developments we are proposing on the Bowden side.

“We are actually starting on the Eastern side of the development and working back down to Port Road, so depending on market take up it is a bit hard to envisage when exactly that will be built and we would probably want to incorporate it into the underground rail,” explained Gibbings.

The undergrounding of the rail has been approved by Infrastructure Australia but it needs federal funding to proceed.

“We were hoping that the funding would be available in this Federal Budget but it wasn’t which I think is understandable with the reconstruction of Queensland and Victoria after the floods, but we are hoping in the next year or so it might come through.”

Just who will ultimately call Bowden

Village home is hard to predict. As a government development, affordable housing and the new buzz word, “key worker” housing, are certainly part of the mix but even Gibbings admits that with land this close to the CBD it will be difficult to control pricing once the ball starts rolling.

“This is a real challenge as history shows if you develop these areas close to the city prices jump up,” he said.

“The median house price is just under \$500,000. We are confident we can put product on the ground that will sell around the \$350,000 and go up. We want to have key worker accommodation. Every city needs its nurses, retail workers, cleaners and we want to make sure we have proper accommodation at Bowden that allows a whole range of demographics to purchase there.”

With the new Royal Adelaide Hospital springing up on the development’s city-side flank, the competition for a spot in the new village is likely to be stiff as hospital workers and people working in associated fringe businesses seek accommodation close to their workplace.

Developers from all over Australia are currently registering their interest in the project in anticipation of the first super lot releases.

– Amanda Pepe

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Once every two years, the company hosts TerraceX showcasing the latest products and giving design professionals an opportunity to come together and view an exhibition of new soft furnishings and furniture ranges and cutting edge manufacturing technology in an exhibition format.

At TerraceX 2011 last month 24 companies exhibited over four days and offered designers, architects, decorators and specialist builders the chance to meet and discuss trends and products. The hot looks were subtle and organic with strong references to nature but highlighted with splashes of bright colour and strong modular forms with just a hint of retro.

PHOTOS: HIROKAZU ISHINO



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## TERRACEX

Design industry members gathered last month at Terrace Floors & Furnishings for the bi-annual TerraceX event presenting exciting new ranges to Adelaide's designers, decorators, architects and specialist builders. More than 20 exhibitors showcased flooring solutions, furniture, soft furnishings, textiles, accessories and artwork.

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## informant

WHAT'S ON IN JUNE

### 2011 SA ARCHITECTURE AWARDS

**When:** June 10

**Where:** The National Wine Centre of Australia

**Cost:** \$115.00 + GST

**Event info:** Dress code – Black Tie “Bringing it Back” seeks to reinvigorate the profession by reminding us of the time when the eccentricity and flair of the Architect were celebrated and revered. Drinks and Canapés provided throughout the night.

To book, please call Marissa on 8402 5911

### Wednesday, June 15

#### DESIGN INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA (SA BRANCH) FUTURIS SITE VISIT

**When:** 3pm

**Where:** 60-70 Purling Avenue, Edinburgh Parks

**Cost:** \$5 members, \$10 non-members, students free. Tickets at [trybooking.com/pok](http://trybooking.com/pok)

**Event info:** Tour the plant of automotive seat designer and manufacturer Futuris. Spaces limited to 12.

### Tuesday, June 28

#### NATIONAL REFUEL – CREATIVE PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

**When:** 5:30 – 7:30pm

**Where:** AIA SA Chapter, 100 Flinders Street ADELAIDE

**Cost:**

Member - \$ 50.00

A+ member - \$ 47.00

Non member - \$ 75.00

Graduate Member - \$ 45.00

SONA - \$ 29.00

Student Non member - \$ 45.00

**Event info:** Speakers - Michelle Delebet and Geoff Barbaro from Corporate Growing Pains.

This seminar shows you how to redirect your creative skills in all areas of business planning and performance. The seminar looks at devising and implementing planning strategies and ways to build high performance teams. Register online at [architecture.com.au/nss](http://architecture.com.au/nss)

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