

BLACKTOWN

Bright future beckons



Nigel Edgar, Kevin Connolly, Rob Stokes, Bob Johnston and Rus Dickens officially open Fairwater Estate last week

Nick Houghton

NSW Minister for Planning Rob Stokes predicts a bright future for Blacktown.

The State MP backed the region's rapid growth and earmarked the city as a strategic centre for Sydney.

Mr Stokes was in Blacktown last week for the launch of Fairwater Estate and said the proposed revitalisation of the CBD would help transform the city.

"Blacktown has an incredible future," Mr Stokes said. "We have targeted the re-

MINISTER BACKS PLAN FOR CBD DEVELOPMENT

gion as one of our strategic centres for metropolitan Sydney.

"What this means is Blacktown City will be a city in every sense of the term.

"Blacktown is going to have its own skyline, its own employment hub and its own lifestyle hub."

Mr Stokes' comments follow NSW Premier Mike Baird signing off on Blacktown Council's Local Environment Plan last month.

The plan predicts 45,000 new jobs will be created in Blacktown in the next 20 years as well as 40,000 homes. Housing and industry areas were also identified in the plan, with new zoning categories that open the door for high-rises up to 24 storeys in Blacktown and 12 storeys in Seven Hills.

Mr Stokes said urban renewal in Blacktown's CBD was the biggest change facing residents.

"The existing residents of Blacktown's surrounding suburbs are not going to see much change to built form," Mr Stokes said.

"What they will see is an increase in opportunity.

"With construction and development focused on the CBD, surrounding suburbs are going to look very much the same but will have much better access to opportunities which will become available in the region."

Despite a push by the council and the Greater Blacktown Business Chamber, Mr Stokes wouldn't commit to moving government agencies to Blacktown.

"We are always looking for sensible opportunities to relocate government agencies," he said.

"The real thing is if we build attractive opportunities for business they will want to relocate themselves.

"While government has a role to play, we want people to choose to relocate their business to Blacktown."