



Buzz as Watson prepares to open

Kurtis Eichler

WALKERVILLE traders are preparing for a business boost on the back of hundreds of people moving into The Watson Apartment and Hotel complex.

The \$120 million rebirth of the former Transport Department building, to be officially opened next week, will eventually be home to more than 300 people.

Walkerville Tce traders say the new residents, as well as The Watson's hotel guests, will further boost the local economy.

For Me and My gift and accessory shop owner Nicole Tsapaliaris, who moved to Walkerville Tce shortly after Woolworths' \$30 million redevelopment opened last year, expected business to pick up.

"There is definitely a bit of a buzz around the place," Ms Tsapaliaris said. "Certainly when Woolworths opened there were a lot more people in the area so I think the same thing will happen."

The Watson Hotel has already opened for business

ahead of the official opening on September 18.

Nest Bistro & Coffee Bar owner Jim Christou said his Walkerville Tce cafe had been asked to provide room service orders.

"We're already starting to get a bit of business from the hotel guests staying there," Mr Christou said.

Acting Walkerville Mayor Tony Reade also predicted an upsurge in trade.

"I think given the fairly short stays The Watson are expecting - it's marketing to the travelling person - I think the food places would benefit," Mr Reade said.

Asian Pacific Group, which has developed The Watson, said local businesses would benefit.

"Walkerville has seen significant private investment over the last few years and this has added to the vibrancy of the suburb while also retaining its unique village feel," chief executive Will Deague said.

The Watson has 210 units and 40 hotel suites. It will also have serviced offices.

TRADERS' VIEWS

I'm gradually seeing people from The Watson sitting in the cafes and looking around the area -
Walkerville Tce lawyer Margaret Graham-King

You would think there would be more people walking around and hopefully the cafes and restaurants will get a bit of business out of it -
Walkerville Shoe Repairs owner Joe Giannini

I reckon it'll bring a few people into the area -
Walkerville Meat Store manager Matt Burke