

Toowoomba is in the midst of a development boom. CHRIS CALCINO looks at what's coming to town

It's serious business as cash flows in

DEVELOPMENT money and concrete foundations are pouring into Toowoomba in equal measure. The boom is evidence of growing confidence in the city's economy and an encouraging sign of things to come.

Auto investment

THE Crampton family is investing \$10 million into expanding its automotive empire along James St. Walls of the new West-Star Motors showrooms have been erected on land beside Toowoomba Hyundai, with a grand opening

expected before Christmas.

Owner Mark Crampton said construction of a Europcar car rental business across the road was on track for an October opening.

The new West-Star building will include Peugeot and Citroen showrooms and a used car yard — firsts for the family business.

Mr Crampton said all indications pointed to a lot of new jobs coming to Toowoomba.

"It's a significant growth so we will obviously be looking to increase staff numbers

accordingly," he said.

Toowoomba Holden, which lies along the same James St auto strip, is in line for refurbishment, to begin next month.

"We have all the tenders back and we're in negotiations with builders at the moment," Mr Crampton said.

The company has pulled back on

plans to construct a purpose-built Europcar rental centre in Roma due to inflated builder quotes.

The business is running from an Ezyquip Hire compound owned by





LEFT: West-Star Motors on James St is set for expansion, refurbishment of existing facilities and construction of a new car hire business totalling about \$10 million of investment.

ABOVE: The walls go up at the West-Star site.

RIGHT: The former Church of Christ on Margaret St has been gutted before becoming the foyer of a 74-room hotel. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

FK Gardner and Sons.

Mr Crampton said it would shift to new leased premises in the third quarter of 2014.

"We still own the land there and the building is all designed but the costs exceeded our expectations," he said.

"We'll come back and revisit the building process at some stage in the future."

Education boom

TWO Toowoomba schools are sharing in more than \$8 million worth of developments intended to cater for Year 7s shifting to high school next year.

Centenary Heights State High School expects construction of its \$5.3 million building to be completed by September.

The two-storey structure will include 12 classrooms.

Toowoomba State High School is in line for a \$3 million development including six classrooms, a joined learning area and staff facilities.

Worker lodgings

FK GARDNER and Sons has applied to the council to develop a 16-room accommodation facility for

its non-residential workforce.

The facility will be located in McDougall St, Glenvale, at the company's main headquarters and depot site.

The development involves

16 accommodation rooms and communal facilities.

It will be used for workers employed by FKG on the

company's projects within the Toowoomba region, including the

Charlton Wellcamp industrial area, CBD high-rise hotel, Highfields

High School and works across the Surat Basin gas fields.

The workers are expected to be mainly truck drivers, tradespeople

and office managers from Brisbane.

The council is expected to make a decision on the proposed development later this year.

James St motel

A NEW 33-room motel has been approved for James St near the intersection with West St.

The motel, to be located at 214 James St, South Toowoomba, will include a single-storey main building and a two-storey manager's residence.

It will be located next door to the Toowoomba Hospital's Fountain House nursing accommodation.

The motel will feature rooms for the disabled and families.

Church hotel

THE redevelopment of a church into a 74-room hotel is still on track to accept its first guests mid-next year.

The former Church of Christ on Margaret St has been gutted to reveal what will become the eight-storey hotel's foyer.

Quest Serviced Apartments has signed on for a long-term tenancy in the building.

College plans \$2m trade centre

ST JOSEPH'S College students will get a head start in their careers if plans to build a \$2 million trade skills centre are approved.

The school is one of 25 across Queensland to be given government funding to undertake the project.

An application to build the two-storey structure on the school's Mackenzie St frontage was made to council last week.

It will require the removal of two buildings to be replaced with construction and engineering workshops, a commercial kitchen and an automotive workshop.

Students will be able to gain qualifications leading to employment in industries such as carpentry, motor mechanics.

BIG INVESTMENT: An aerial view of St Joseph's College in Rangeville showing the location of the proposed trade skills centre (in red).

stonemasonry and hospitality.

The building will have a total floor area of 975sq m and will not increase student or staff numbers.

The Scots PGC College in Warwick and Goondwindi State High School have received funding for similar training centres.