

Media Release

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New precinct planned for Sacred Heart Cathedral site aims to give Bendigo a boost

The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst has submitted plans to rejuvenate the church-owned land adjacent to Sacred Heart Cathedral at the corner of High Street and Short Street.

The \$30 million plans will create a new precinct in Bendigo called Cathedral Square.

The new Cathedral Square development will create a vibrant new public space and tourism landmark at the entrance to Bendigo. It will include a new contemporary building and newly landscaped parklands that will respect the local aesthetic and complement the Cathedral.

The application submitted to the City of Greater Bendigo includes plans for a retail space and parking as well as the administrative offices of the Diocese and Catholic Education Sandhurst.

The development will also provide social and economic benefits to the area. It will see the creation of new jobs in the hospitality and retail sectors.

The flagship commercial tenant will be a new Bendigo Chocolaterie and Ice-Creamery, created by the founders of the experienced and successful tourist destinations already operating across three sites in the Yarra Valley, on the surf coast and on the Mornington Peninsula.

The Bishop of Sandhurst, the Most Reverend Shane Mackinlay, said the new offering will bring great benefits to the City of Bendigo and will complement Sacred Heart Cathedral.

He said: "We believe that we've got the right mix, with commercial tenants that support the project and improve the entrance to Bendigo, as well as providing additional services and amenities to the many people who visit the Cathedral each year.

"This new precinct is designed to further enhance Sacred Heart Cathedral as the heart of the Diocese and a landmark presence in the city," said Bishop Mackinlay.

Bishop Mackinlay recently spoke about the project at public information sessions with local residents and parishioners.

"We spoke to local residents to outline our plans for the project and to get their input before applying for a planning permit from the Council. We were encouraged by the level of support from attendees to see the project progress, with one neighbour even describing it as 'visionary'.

Further consultation with the local community is planned once the Council gives approval for this project to proceed," said Bishop Mackinlay.

Work on the site is expected to commence in the second half of 2024 with an opening date of early 2026.

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