



MACQUARIE PARK

a special advertising report

Boom regions set for takeoff

THE long-awaited Epping-Chatswood rail link will open this weekend, adding fuel to the region's rapid trajectory of growth - provided it can cope with demand.

Costing \$2.3 billion, the three new stations will service the booming areas of Macquarie Park, Macquarie University and North Ryde.

Ryde Mayor, Councillor Vic Tagg, said the service was vital to the long term, sustainable development of the Macquarie Park business precinct.

Covering 340ha, it is already the second-largest business district in NSW in terms of total available commercial floor space. "If it continues to grow as planned, Macquarie Park will become the fourth-largest business centre in Australia by 2031," Cr Tagg said.

Council anticipates that 40 per cent of Macquarie Park workers will commute via public transport by 2031, more than double the current usage. This is expected to significantly alleviate pressure on the area's grossly congested arterial roads.

However, with more than 12,000 extra people expected to use the CityRail network each day, some local businesses have reservations about its capacity. Ryde Business Forum Chairman, Andrew Bland, said the current plan to run

services every 15 minutes may not make it a viable alternative to driving.

"This area, even though it has a large population of its own, still relies upon people travelling from all over Sydney to get here," Mr Bland said. "If it is presenting itself as an alternative to the city or Parramatta, it needs more than the train stations being put in place. Services need to be frequent enough so people will take up the option. If they're waiting 10 or 15 minutes at the train station, they'll likely to question whether it's really worth it."

If suitably serviced, however, Mr Bland says the rail link will add the missing piece to the region's business potential: "It's geographically central in terms of the major population growth areas in the west and north-west, there are good facilities, such as the Macquarie Centre, and the proximity to Macquarie University presents businesses with strong R&D potential and access to graduate workers."

Construction of the link has already been the catalyst for investment of several billion in commercial development, infrastructure, retail and community facilities in the Macquarie Park business district. Optus, Siemens, Foxtel and Microsoft are among the big players who have already established head offices in the 340ha



Vital connection: Macquarie Park Station prior to its commission this weekend

corridor. NSW Minister for Transport, David Campbell, said CityRail crew who will be operating the Rail Link have undergone training and are ready to roll.

"Over 10,000 people have worked on the tunnels and stations and, importantly, the project is continuing to create jobs in the rail sector," he said. "It will also be a great stimulus for the local economy by providing access to the Macquarie Park business precinct and the University."

Currently the largest public infrastructure

project in the state, the three new stations have been fitted with new technology, wide open concourses and modern facilities.

"The unique, futuristic design of the stations reflects perfectly the vibrancy and high-tech environment of Macquarie Park," Cr Tagg said.

From this Sunday, the link will operate as a shuttle service between 6am and 9.30pm daily, with trains operating to Chatswood and Epping.

It is expected to be fully integrated into the CityRail network, and incorporated into the timetable, later this year.

The City of Ryde welcomes the opening of the new Epping

RYDE TO RELAXATION