

Celebrating the official opening of The Bendigo Centre

Development a jewel in our city's crown

Early in 2004, Bendigo Bank approached the City of Greater Bendigo to pursue redevelopment of the current Fountain Court site for its new head office.

The Council was most supportive of this decision as the development of a large commercial office building in the Bendigo CBD would be of substantial economic benefit to the region.

By mid-year the Bank lodged a planning application for the precinct which involved consolidation of a number of land titles, demolition several buildings in Bath Lane and transfer of ownership of two parcels of council-owned car parking land. In October, council approved the permit for the development which was the largest building development ever proposed for the Bendigo CBD.

Council welcomed the development as they were aware that the project would rejuvenate Bendigo's CBD

and generate major benefits in terms of jobs, skills development and wealth creation within the region.

A strategic objective in the City of Greater Bendigo Council Plan is to develop Bendigo as the prime commercial and service centre of the region and the location of the Bendigo Bank headquarters in the CBD and the ground floor retail tenants of the building will provide great potential to contribute to the prosperity of other businesses in the area.

In addition to the construction of the head office, the development included the transformation of an open drain into a valued pedestrian boardwalk over the Bendigo Creek and the creation of a major public square with laneways linking the space to existing and new retail outlets and businesses, integrating the working city with the recreational life of the community.

The precinct will revitalise the central business district and become a focal point for the local community and visitors to the CBD. It will enhance the ambience and functionality of the centre of Bendigo and will create additional business opportunities to support tourism, hospitality and recreation activities.

With the completion of the head office, the new building accommodate around 900 staff which is expected to grow to 1000 in the medium term and will be a significant boost to regional employment and a major boost to the Bendigo economy.

The building has set new ecologically-sustainable development design and construction standards for regional Australia and the urban environment created in the precinct will be unique outside Melbourne with its café lane, promenade deck, winter-garden and piazza.

As home to this important financial institution, Bendigo is the envy of other regional cities and the \$100 million headquarters demonstrates the Bank's ongoing commitment to our city and our region.

The local economy has been bolstered by the three years of building development with a significant number of local firms involved in the construction and fit out.

City of Greater Bendigo Council, staff and ratepayers congratulate Bendigo Bank on the occasion of the opening of its new head office. We look forward to a continued long and successful working relationship with the Bendigo Bank for the greater benefit of the municipality of Bendigo and the regional community.

**Craig Niemann, CEO,
City of Greater Bendigo.**



Simon Perry (Small Business Manager), Sheryle Watson (Branch Manager) and Russell Jenkins (Chief General Manager of Retail & Distribution).

Network of the Future

Customers will experience a new concept in banking at the flagship Bendigo Central Branch - one of the innovative Network of the Future branches to be unveiled by Bendigo Bank in the coming years.

There to welcome customers to the branch will be a Customer and Community Engagement Officer - a designated role to provide assistance and to direct inquiries within the branch. The appointment encapsulates the personal touch to banking at The Bendigo.

The beauty of the branch is that it allows customers to choose how they conduct their banking, either face-to-face or through the use of technology.

For businesses that handle large amounts of cash, self-serve technology includes a coin-counting machine. Customers also have access to internet kiosks.

Research shows many customers now prefer to do their banking over the phone or online, with more than 90% of transactions conducted electronically - that's an increase of almost 30% since 2001. The services the new branches provide cater for this behavioural changes.

Network of the Future - where technology and customer service provide an efficient mix for modern banking - has been a pilot project for the bank.

And the new Bendigo Central Branch will be among the first to

give the new retail experience to customers, staff and communities.

Russell Jenkins, Manager, Retail Customers said Bendigo Central Branch would be the largest in the network, with 500 square metres and 15 staff attending to customer service.

Sites currently operating with the new layout and technology are Bunbury in Western Australia, North Adelaide, Carlton and Greensborough and South Melbourne. South Morang will also open later this year.

The new look branches and technology will continue to be rolled out next year and would be included in company and **Community Bank®** sites.