

Tourism hub for town

St Andrews leaders endorse \$1m bed-and-breakfast apartments and shop development

Development | Raelene Wilson

A SHOP and housing development in St Andrews promises to be the town's biggest private development in 100 years.

Nillumbik councillor Michael Young has begun the \$1 million project opposite the town's Saturday market site, already completing the shop and having started on building two bed-and-breakfast apartments.

He said he was yet to sign a tenant

for the shop but there had been "strong interest" from a specialist in natural therapies and a chef for a woodfired pizza restaurant. The site is on Kangaroo Ground-St Andrew Rd.

"The site has been sitting there for a long time," Cr Young said.

"It's a prominent site in St Andrews and was at risk of the wrong development. Sometimes the best way to preserve an area is to sensitively develop it in tune with the neighbourhood character."

Cr Young said he hoped to open both the shop and the yet-to-be-named bed and breakfast in six months.

St Andrews resident and former Nillumbik Mayor Robert Marshall welcomed the development and said it "enhanced the character of St Andrews".

"What Michael has done is a good development that is in sync with the lifestyle of St Andrews and is complementary to nearby facilities, such as the hotel and the mar-

ket," Mr Marshall said. Fellow Andrews resident and Green Wedge Protection Group president Kahn Franke said Cr Young was "thinking on the right scale".

"It's a small-scale development that ties in with the green wedge and is still right in the heart of the community," Mr Franke said of the development.

Cr Young said he had used recycled building materials for the development, including timber, steel, bricks and mud bricks.



Mud bricklayer David Young works on a building at St Andrews, with a new study hoped to prove mudbrick buildings' energy efficiency.

Picture: ANDY DREWITT N38D/V2

Study goal to show energy efficiencies clear as mud

THE Nillumbik Mudbrick Association has set out to prove once again the energy efficiency of the shire's iconic building material.

Sustainability Victoria last week gave the group \$12,500 towards a \$25,000 study into the requirements mudbrick homes needed to meet new six-star energy ratings.

Association vice-president Michael Young said in-kind sup-

port from local builders and architects would cover the rest of the two-month project. "What we want to do is achieve six stars without compromising the beauty and integrity of mudbricks," he said.

"We've looked at the essential elements of a mudbrick home and what can be taken away to get the rating."

Cr Young said the study would

involve the design of three mudbrick homes of various sizes, storeys and styles to meet the six-star energy rating.

He said the study would ensure a smooth transition to the new rating, to become mandatory for new homes from May.

In 2004 mudbrick homes failed to rate above an average two stars. The association fought

relentlessly for new energy-rating software, released in 2007. "Historically we've lobbied government and had success along the way and through that built a partnership with the energy agency," Cr Young said. "We've got a good thing going for this new six-star challenge."

Sustainability Victoria said the study would help builders meet the new regulatory requirements.