



Owners doing their bit to create a slice of paradise

Surfers reaches for the stars

by Tanya Westthorp

WHEN the music booming from Surfers Paradise nightclubs stops, the glitter strip comes alive with the sound of jackhammers and the beeping of reversing construction trucks.

Surfers Paradise is abuzz with building and renovation activity.

It is undergoing a major transformation with several clubs spending up big on revamps and the Hilton and Soul developments surging ahead.

Yesterday, hundreds of construction workers were crawling across the restarted \$700 million Hilton Surfers Paradise site and the 77-storey \$850 million Soul development.

The renewed activity has also sparked revamps among clubs along the glitter strip.

The Avenue is undergoing a major \$270,000 renovation, more than \$200,000 is being spent on beautifying the Orchid Avenue building which houses Hollywood Showgirls and the Surfers Paradise Beer Garden is also in the midst of a renovation.

The efforts to beautify Surfer Paradise come on the back of Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon's comments this week comparing binge drinking in the area to Sydney's notorious Kings Cross red-light district.

The Avenue owner Vince Russo said his popular pub had been shut since Sunday night for the \$270,000 revamp which includes a new bar, new floorboards, sound equipment and lighting as well as handmade tiles in the bathrooms.

The new-look pub will be reopened by the weekend but planned further renovations in November will include private booths and VIP areas.

"Everyone says, 'It's packed all the time, why do you need to do it,'" said Mr Russo. "But last time we renovated, we got even more people in."

Yesterday, crane operators were busily erecting an architecturally designed steel awning outside Hollywood Showgirls.

It will take three weeks to finish and cost more than \$200,000 but is part of owner Elvio Pugliese's plan to beautify the streetfront.

He recently completed a \$250,000 new deck for the

neighbouring 21 Nightclub and said he was helping to bring the precinct up to international standard.

"I had a trip to Vegas and I wanted to look at some sort of facelift that would suit the precinct and give it a wow factor," he said.

The steps in front of Cocktails and Dreams nightclub were being repaired yesterday while the Surfers Paradise Beer Garden was also under renovation.

Meanwhile, the ground floors on both Hilton towers have been completed and earthmovers were yesterday shovelling loads of sand into trucks as they excavated a 18m-deep basement – the deepest on the Coast.

Soul developer, the Juniper Group, will also start foreshore works on the \$25 million Surfers Paradise Foreshore redevelopment this month and the Gold Coast City Council will begin preliminary work on its site in January.



Surfers is abuzz with activity as construction and renovation works at, from left, the Hilton, Hollywood Showgirls and Soul get into full swing



Owners of The Avenue. Michael and Vince Russo

● Pictures: Mike Batterham