

OUR COAST

It's so very close

Hopes up for David Jones proposal

By **MARIK BODE**
mark.bode@secretnews.com.au

DAVID Jones is so close to finally securing approval for its much-anticipated Sunshine Plaza store it can taste it - and so can thousands of Sunshine Coast shoppers.

The retail giant yesterday welcomed news approval had been given for a second department store at the complex, saying it paved the way for it launching there within two years.

The Daily revealed yesterday that the go-ahead for a second department store at the Plaza had been granted in the revised State Government-approved Maroochydore CBD structure plan.

David Jones Group general manager retail development Antony Karp said he was "very encouraged" after the council had initially tried to position the store at nearby land currently occupied by Horton Park Golf Club.

Mr Karp said it was now a matter for Lend Lease, the development manager of the Plaza, to comply with the planning process so that the council would approve the application for a David Jones store at the Coast's



COMING SOON: An artist's impression of the David Jones store proposed for the Sunshine Plaza.

biggest shopping centre. That application is before the council with 2012 the targeted opening date.

It is believed concerns over adequate car parking is the chief issue that could prevent the project's launch.

Access, foot traffic and signage issues also have to be considered before the store is given the go ahead.

"We're very encouraged by both the council's amendment to the structure plan and the State Government's

acceptance of it, as it will, subject to Lend Lease complying with the planning process, facilitate the development of a new David Jones department store at Sunshine Plaza in the very near future," Mr Karp said.

"... In light of this new development, we look forward to meeting with Lend Lease, if not next week right after New Year, to establish and confirm a timeline for the construction and opening."

David Jones wants to

open a store of at least 14,000sq m, and it is understood the store has been earmarked for the site that Kmart occupies.

However, it is believed the total floor space with speciality stores would be at least 28,000sq m, although it is thought Lend Lease has even more space available.

While Mr Karp insisted there would be sufficient space to cater for David Jones and the speciality stores, Maroochydore

Chamber of Commerce president Myles McNamara was not as sure.

Mr McNamara questioned whether Sunshine Plaza was the best location for David Jones.

"I'm a bit concerned that the retailing hierarchy is not sustainable by having such a small amount of square meterage being allocated to the Sunshine Plaza precinct," he said. "Just 28,000sq m is not enough."