



ABUZZ: Crowds flock outside Flinders St Station in Melbourne. The city transformed itself by taking advantage of existing infrastructure.

Picture: IAN CURRIE

LAUREN NOVAK
POLITICAL REPORTER

DEVELOPERS are increasingly turning to disused buildings and infill developments to bring people in from the suburbs in a trend similar to the one that transformed Melbourne.

At Walkerville, Melbourne-based property developer Asian Pacific Group has begun construction on a \$120 million development with a mix of hotel and residential accommodation, which will transform the former Transport Department site.

The group's founder David Deague said there had been a push in the past two decades in Melbourne to encourage developers to take advantage of infrastructure in the city rather than spread into the suburbs.

The trend was now taking hold in Adelaide.

"All the kids in the suburbs in Melbourne have got two cars, they're in an hour's traffic every morning, it doesn't make sense, so our Government's pulled them back into the city," he said.

"They get rid of the car, they work in the city, they walk to their workplace, all the cafes are booming.

"Melbourne was dead 20 years ago and now the city's alive and I see the same happening in Adelaide."

The Walkerville development will offer residents free bicycles and smart cars for hire.

Urban Development Institute of Australia state executive director Terry Walsh said he expected to see "a lot more" developments recycling existing buildings closer to the city.

"This is a relatively easy way of converting an existing dysfunctional building into a more modern approach," he said of the Walkerville development.

Opposition planning spokeswoman Vickie Chapman said she had been told by those in the industry there were enough empty or disused building spaces in Adelaide's CBD to create up to 9000 medium density dwellings.

However, she said current planning laws made it difficult and expensive to convert older buildings to new safety or environmental standards.

Mr Deague said his company was already considering redeveloping another city building in Adelaide.

Property Council SA executive director Nathan Paine said there were many CBD buildings which could be refurbished for residential use.



REVIVAL: Asian Pacific Group's development planned for Walkerville, The Watson.