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## BUSINESS

# Popular family business to unveil exciting \$8m development

👤 by [LACHLAN MCIVOR](#)

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56



A POPULAR family-run pub which has been set up on the side of the Warrego Highway for more than 100 years is close to finishing work on its \$8 million development.

The project, which will double the size of Porters Plainland Hotel, is six or seven weeks away from completion and is expected to welcome customers by the end of May.

It will grow the business to include 16 motel rooms, a new function room capable of seating 120 people and a dedicated gaming lounge.

The pub first started trading in 1914 and Dick and Rita Porter leased it from Castlemaine Perkins in 1946.

It has been run by the family ever since, with Bob and Julie the next to take over the reins and the current generation of Mel, Michael and his wife Shelley now running the show.

The new facilities will cater for a growing customer base and to satisfy a strong demand for accommodation and function spaces in the Lockyer Valley.

Figures released by the state valuation service this month showed Plainland's median land valuations had risen by 34.7 per cent since 2016. Growth is credited to the residential and commercial development in the area, most notably the Plainland Crossing hub just across the highway from Porters.

"It's a massive outlay for our business," Michael said.

"It's certainly something of a scale we've never undertaken before but the area, we think, is ready for it.

"There's good, strong growth in Plainland that was backed up recently by the release of the current land valuations. There's a lot that is going to be happening in the next five to 10 years out here in Plainland."

Enquiries for functions have started to flow in, but the biggest interest has been for accommodation.

All 16 motel rooms have already been booked out for a date in September. Porters employs 63 people and several current workers are expected to take on jobs in the new spaces.

The business expects to employ at least half a dozen more staff in the next 12 months and extra wait staff will be needed to cater for large functions.

Adding accommodation has been a long-time aspiration for Bob and Julie.

"Dad got a bit emotional when we took him into the construction site," Michael said.

"Dad has lived his whole life here in Plainland, in and around the hotel.

"It means a lot to all of us. We can't wait for it to be finished and get open and trading."

The new function room will adjoin the hotel's existing dining room and will be capable of holding 120 people in banquet style seating, or divided into three smaller rooms for more intimate gatherings.

Those new facilities will be joined by motel rooms over two levels, with guests welcomed at a reception at the rear of the hotel.

A new standalone gaming room will offer punters a more private and spacious area with its own dedicated bar, while the existing gaming area will be converted into a raised dining platform.

An open day will be held for the community to check out the new facilities in late May or early June.