

Northern jobs boom - Star News group 16/05/2006



Taking off ... An aerial photo of the Tullamarine/Calder freeway interchange. The new development will be between the interchange (right) and the runway (top).

THOUSANDS of jobs will be generated in the North with the transformation of Essendon Airport land into Melbourne's newest business hub, according to developers.

The \$500 million Essendon Fields development, set to be completed in 10 years, is already attracting big business with security giant Armaguard signing up to call the district home.

An international business hotel, childcare facilities, restaurants and a supermarket are also earmarked for development later in the year to cater for up to 6000 new workers in the area.

The district's first commercial development, Essendon Fields House, began construction last Wednesday with a ceremonial concrete pour by Linfox Property Group managing director Andrew Fox and Becton chairman, Max Beck.

The two property groups bought Essendon Airport in 2001.

Three businesses have already signed up to lease parts of Essendon Fields House and Essendon Fields' CEO Rob Whitwell said he was confident more would follow.

"Essendon Fields is one of Melbourne's largest master planned business communities and second only to Docklands," he said.

Mr Whitwell said he expected "significant" job opportunities to be created for residents in the North.

He also said the development was fitting in well with local traders' who initially feared losing business.

"It's actually brought new people into the area who may never have usually stopped there," he said.

The \$9 million Essendon Fields House development follows the district's first retail building, Direct Factory Outlet (DFO), completed late last year.

