

Launch of a landmark

by Peter Strachan

ST KILDA'S \$55 million Metropol residential and retail complex will be launched tonight (Monday, August 14).

Deputy Premier John Thwaites will perform a ground-breaking ceremony at the project site, at the corner of Fitzroy St and Canterbury Rd, at 6pm.

As St Kilda's biggest development, Metropol will include 119 apartments, a David Jones food store, 18 restaurants and retail stores, a community

village piazza area and extensive underground parking.

It will also form a transport nucleus for the area. Transport Minister Peter Batchelor will rename the tram and bus stop Metropol St Kilda.

The first Melbourne performance of the Adelaide Festival of Arts-inspired *Bobcat Ballet*, a sound and light show, will be a highlight of the evening's entertainment. Dame Elisabeth Murdoch will attend to accept a cheque on behalf of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

The completed Metropol project

will consist of three buildings, linked by a series of private and public courtyards, on the site of the old St Kilda railway station.

To support St Kilda's artistic heritage, developer R. Corporation has formed a committee to commission sculptures for the piazza. Committee members are Port Phillip Mayor Julian Hill, councillor David Brand, Sussan Corporation chief executive officer Naomi Milgrom, retired gallery director Bruce Pollard and National Gallery of Victoria curator Jennifer Phipps.

Metropol already houses Mauro

Marcucci's Termini restaurant. Developers say all but nine of the apartments have been sold and there has been strong interest in the shop sites.

A spokesman for the builders, Thiess Pty Ltd managing director Martin Albrecht, said Metropol would become an important St Kilda development.

"I am sure it will become a landmark development, both in terms of its innovative mix of public, retail, residential and transport use and also its physical location at the gateway to St Kilda," Mr Albrecht said.