

# Herald Sun

Business

## Newmark Capital reveals grocer, major retailer to fill David Jones store

The Bourke St building will undergo a transformation when David Jones moves its menswear store across the road, its new owners say.

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The new owners of David Jones' menswear store in Bourke Street Mall say the CBD will remain Melbourne's heart and soul as it pushes ahead with plans to overhaul the building.

Melbourne-based Newmark Capital, backed by former Hawthorn champion Chris Langford, bedded down a deal to buy the [seven-level building](#) at 299 Bourke St for \$121 million in July.

The city has since weathered a strict stage four lockdown that turned central Melbourne into a ghost town for much of that time and raised questions about the future of work in the CBD.

Mr Langford said that while the CBD had been battered by the pandemic, Newmark was more than confident it would bounce back and prime commercial property would always be in demand.

"We've said from the beginning that we think the CBD is the pinnacle of retail and Bourke St is the best of the best," he said.



Retail staff in David Jones Bourke St menswear store. Picture: Jay Town

“Our view is that when things pick up — and we have no doubt that it is a when not an if — Bourke St will once again be the top of the tree.

“This is a unique and rare opportunity. There are only a handful of properties that haven’t been subdivided into arcades or gallerias of one sort or another, that actually create the opportunity for a genuine flagship location.”

[David Jones](#) will remain in the menswear store until the middle of 2022, when it will consolidate in what is now its womenswear store at 310 Bourke St, opposite the menswear store.

Newmark will then refurbish the property, with the lower three levels to house retail, including a supermarket in the basement — now home to the David Jones food court.

The top four floors will be converted to loft-style office space targeting industries such as marketing and technology.

Newmark, an unlisted property funds manager, is in discussion with seven major retailers who are looking to create a flagship store in the ground and first floor of the building.



The David Jones menswear store at 299 Bourke St, Melbourne.

These are made up of retailers who already have a presence in Melbourne, as well as some who are planning to enter the city.

Mr Langford said the Melbourne CBD was what made the city unique and that would not change post-COVID.

“The city itself is the heart of everything in Melbourne,” he said.

“It’s not just a business centre. It’s a community place, it’s an entertainment place, it’s a dining place, it’s an arts place.

“It’s not just a working place and you can’t say the same thing of a lot of other city centres in Australia or the world.”

Newmark has built up a blue-chip retail property portfolio since it was launched in 2011, with other assets including the Jam Factory and Como Centre in South Yarra and Chadstone Homeplus Homemaker Centre.