

Fabulous facelift

MANDURAH

A picturesque aquatic playground of beaches and waterways, with a bustling, cosmopolitan culture, writes Ingrid Jacobson.

MANDURAH has morphed from a sleepy, seaside town into a vibrant tourist mecca.

It's the fastest-growing regional city in Australia and its magic hinges on its location on a picturesque estuary, overlooking the Indian Ocean.

And Mandurah's proximity to Perth – on a good traffic day, only 30 minutes by car – will soon be supplemented by the Southern Suburbs Rail link, a 48-minute journey.

Despite an increasingly sophisticated skyline of resorts, cafes and restaurants, and a burgeoning network of canals lined with luxury homes and private jetties, Mandurah has managed

to retain the relaxed, holiday atmosphere that has been its drawcard.

Water activities continue to dominate the estuary which is dotted with hire boats, paddle boats and cruisers, while the fun park, open year-round on the western foreshore, remains a landmark.

But the famous foreshore, where countless generations have promenaded and enjoyed fish and chips, has enjoyed a fabulous facelift that is still evolving.

The Boardwalk Precinct, overlooking Mandjar Bay, has countless cafes, restaurants, shops, cinema complex and the jewel in the crown, the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre.

The Point development on the old Peninsula Hotel site has also started and when

finished will include two luxury apartment buildings, a hotel, bar, brasserie and shops.

The nearby Mandurah Ocean Marina is home to pleasure craft, houseboats, undercover markets, cafes, restaurants, art galleries and Dolphin Quay, the name inspired by the resident bottlenose dolphins regularly seen swimming in the harbour and estuary.

Accommodation has also become more diverse, with the city offering everything from self-contained apartments next to the waterways and canal-side bed-and-breakfasts, to resorts with ocean views.

The opening of Seashells Resort has provided new

glamour as the hotel/chalet complex enjoys absolute ocean frontage on Town Beach.

In many ways, Mandurah is more like an archipelago of small islands set against the broader backdrop of the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary that are fed by three rivers – the Murray, the Serpentine and the Harvey – and are good for fishing, crabbing, swimming and boating.

For nature lovers, there's bushwalking in the nearby Yalgorup National Park, observing the ancient thrombolites at Lake Clifton, or exploring the Creery

Wetlands via numerous walking trails and viewing platforms.

Family attractions, such as the Peel Zoo and Abingdon Miniature Village, and destinations such as Pinjarra, Boddington, Serpentine, Jarrahdale and Waroona are all close by.



www.visitmandurah.com
www.seashells.com.au