etopia

an ecological utopia exploring millions of years of evolution, telling the story of life while looking to the future of our environment

...nature’s own living museum

a living theatre of plants and people, telling their history and anticipating the future of their interdependence

For more information contact Toowoomba City Council on 4688 6703
February 2003
As visitors wander through etopia they will enjoy the stories of man and his environment, their interdependence and evolution. A clear chronological pathway through the site has been designed for three distinct precincts of the Past, the Present and the Future. This journey will follow the evolution, development, utilisation and preservation of man and the environment. Stories will include those of the natural elements being water, air, soil, stone, fire, and of course plants. These stories will be told through physical and artistic elements.

The project has been planned to integrate the key objectives and aims into a seamless whole, with the major features zoned as:

- etopia - gardens and parkland
- the terraces - terrace apartments and medium density housing
- the central plateau - educational campus
- western terrace - recycling and waste treatment industries
- northern plateau - eco-hotel and conference facility

Water will be a major unifying element throughout etopia, whose story will encompass the seven themes and objectives, displaying water in nature, man’s adaptation and utilisation, treatment and recycling.

Communal facilities directly associated with etopia include:

- Visitor centre
- Exhibition spaces
- Waterfall café
- Book and souvenir shop
- Plant nursery
- Amphitheatre
- Kiosks

The etopia experience will be a pleasant and memorable journey; informative, educational and enjoyable.
etopia has been planned and designed to support a number of initiatives. Within a spectacular garden parkland will be an educational campus, waste treatment and recycling facility, passive energy utilities, sustainable housing and an eco-hotel and conference facility providing an holistic experience of nature.

etopia’s displays and features will be focussed on the following themes:

- Earth
- Ecology
- Evolution
- Environment
- Energy
- Education
- Economics

These themes will be expressed in stories using cultural, geological, horticultural and architectural principles in the manner of modern museums. etopia will be nature’s own living museum.

etopia objectives

The principal object of etopia is to be the catalyst for economic development in Toowoomba and surrounding districts and in doing so, will draw upon its history and status as a Garden City. The creation of etopia in the rehabilitation of the Bridge Street Quarry site will also result in a source of beauty, recreation and education for the local community.

Key objects in developing etopia in Toowoomba are to:

- Increase international and domestic tourist visits to Queensland
- Enhance the attractiveness of Toowoomba and its region as a tourist destination
- Maximise the economic impact of commercial enterprises such as a Convention Centre on the Darling Downs area of Queensland
- Stimulate capital investment in the region’s economy from the construction and operation of etopia
- Enhance the investment profile of the region
- Foster the growth of existing industries and nurture the development of nascent industries.

etopia is planned to be a Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Development and house the pre-eminent Horticultural Educational Institution in Queensland.

etopia may also have a number of secondary objectives that would be developed over time.

The aim is for etopia to be a model project to:

- Encompass environmentally sustainable development principles in the design and operation of the complex
- Exploit the opportunity for utilising green industry by-products and waste for recycling
- Be a centre of innovation in the application of natural principles to industry
- Exhibit and interpret the geology of Toowoomba and the Dividing Range
- Exploit the opportunities for an export industry in Australian native flora
- Demonstrate the restoration of landscapes severely altered by extractive industries

It is envisaged that etopia will have the corporate support of local industry and encourage and enjoy wide-spread community involvement. A willing volunteer group committed to the success of the Gardens will be an essential ingredient in fulfilling the vision for etopia.

etopia stories

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the Redevelopment of Bridge Street Quarry, Toowoomba, Queensland