

# Focus on Palmer St in development study

[TONY RAGGATT](#) | October 17th, 2012

**THE transformation of Townsville's Palmer St from a city backwater to a hospitality and dining mecca is being studied to provide clues on the catalysts for property development and city renewal.**

Sydney developer Jonathan Drane, who was himself involved in the making of Palmer St, is in the city interviewing people for doctoral research he is undertaking with the University of NSW.

Mr Drane, part of a developer group which initially proposed the Gateway on Palmer apartment and restaurant project, is writing a thesis on property development theory.

"My theory is that there is a mechanism related to property development which unlocks sites and puts buildings on them," he said. "It relies on a number of factors ... not just economic."

Mr Drane said Palmer St, where hundreds of millions of dollars worth of development had occurred over the past decade, had been an obvious success.

He was also studying the renewal of Newcastle's waterfront Honeysuckle Drive and another Townsville renewal project, Central, being developed on the former North railway yards in the CBD.

Mr Drane said opinions appeared to differ over the aspects which had been most responsible for the changes to Palmer St.

"How is it that over a period of a few years in the mid 2000s a precinct could change so rapidly?" he said.

He said the reasons ranged from the closure of the road to port trucks through to the opening of inventive restaurants.