

# go... to the triffid in... brisbane

*On the inner-city fringe of Brisbane, a member of the city's rock royalty is sowing the seeds for a venue set to transform the city's live-music scene*



**Former Powderfinger bassist John Collins (pictured) only just arrived, but he is already**

**talking about The Go-Betweens. "Why did they call it the Go Between Bridge? And not the Go-Betweens Bridge?" he asks.**

I'm not sure how we started on the topic of the recently built Brisbane River overpass.

But you soon learn that's John Collins, or JC, as he's known: he's all asides and sudden digressions, the mind running quicker than the mouth will follow. "If you're going to name it after a band, name it after the band," he says, incredulously.

Collins is of course a founding member of a group arguably even more important to Brisbane than The Go-Betweens. Powderfinger played their last show just four years ago, but plenty of fans refuse to come to terms with

the fact that the five-piece have quit. For the 43-year-old Collins, there was a similar sense of loss for a year. "Sure, I was sad, emotional," he says. "But it was a good thing. And I realised once we stopped how much of a machine we were. How much pressure we put on ourselves."

We're talking on the back terrace of a refurbished

Waterloo Hotel in the Brisbane inner-city suburb of Newstead.

Collins remembers

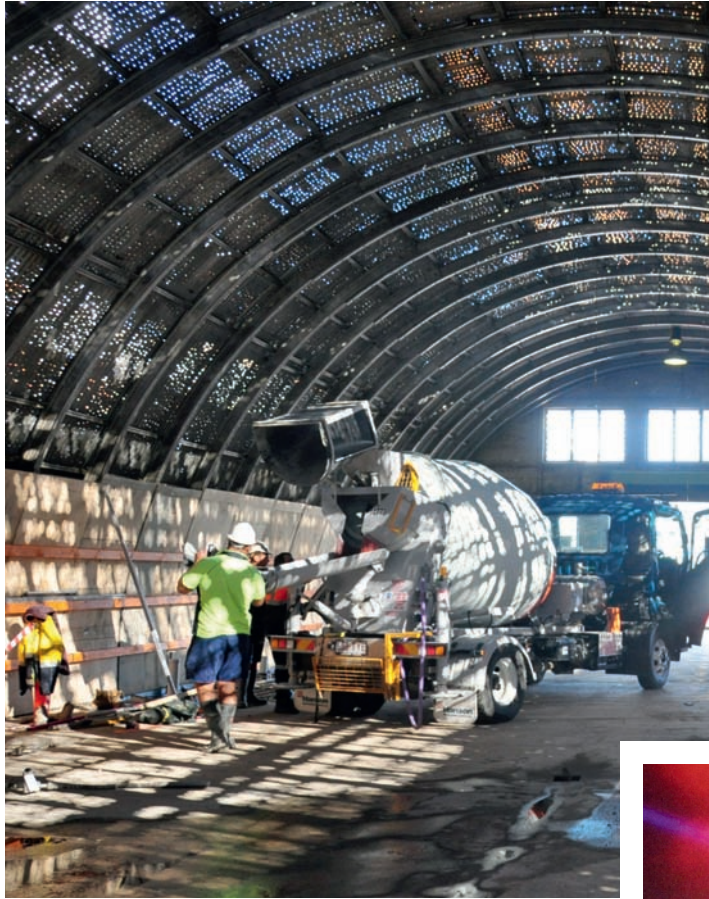
Powderfinger playing a formative gig at a very different, beer-stained Waterloo in the early '90s with Melbourne band, Weddings Parties Anything.

"I thought for a year I could do something different, but I've been doing this since I was 15...

It was realising Brisbane needed a particular type of venue. And I think it just drew me »



**It's about time Brisbane had these satellite destinations**



Construction is under way on the Triffid (above); Powderfinger in full flight (right). John Collins says his new venue would have been perfect for his former band

back that way," he says, jerking his sandy mop of hair in the direction of a World War II-era blister hangar that sits just across the street.

This is the Triffid, an 800-capacity concert space set to fill what Collins considers the obvious need in Brisbane's live-music scene for a medium-sized venue. To the bassist it's the "magic number" for many venues across the United States and Europe. "That was the sort of size band [Powderfinger] were," he says.

At the time of writing, the site itself is some way from being finished. But as he shows you around, Collins paints a vivid picture of what he's trying to achieve. By its launch on 8 November, the Triffid will be two venues in one. The first a concert space, housed in the snappy steel hangar and padded with layer upon layer of soundproofing and insulation.

The second will be a bar and beer garden, where punters can congregate from the afternoon long into the evening for drinks and food. Collins shows off the outside space, which is dotted with shipping containers that are being

turned into bars, bathrooms and storage space. "Basically, the idea is to have a place where you can come and have a drink, and a place where you can come and see a band," he says. "If your mates want to come and see a band [that you're not into], you can come here and catch up with them anyway."

Put together, the whole venue seems custom made for Brisbane, the northern capital that can't take its foot off the accelerator. And it's all away from the traditional entertainment precinct of Fortitude Valley, just up the road from the Triffid, which can no longer contain Brisbane's interest in live music. "It's about time Brisbane had these satellite destinations," Collins says. "The Hi-Fi in West End, a lot of young people are going there now. And Lefty's [on Caxton Street] offers something different. Hopefully we'll be another one of those chapters that people talk about." [7 Stratton St, Newstead; thetriffid.com.au](http://www.thetriffid.com.au)



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