

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Property

Dahua extends its Melbourne pipeline

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Chinese development giant Dahua has strengthened its stranglehold on the Melbourne land market after buying the Riverhills Estate in the city's north.

Hugh Lu, development manager at Dahua Melbourne, confirmed the acquisition, but would not say how much it paid.

"Dahua Melbourne is confident in the Melbourne property market and we are looking to expand our portfolio with our latest site acquisition at 90 Bindts Road, Wollert," Mr Lu said.

"We are pleased to extend our pipeline and commitment to the Australian property market. We are currently going through the planning permit process and are looking forward to delivering a premium community to the suburb of Wollert," he said.

The 191-hectare site with about 50 developable hectares on Bindts Road is being promoted by Melbourne development firm PSCA, led by Ross Voci and is also advertised by land sales specialists RPM Real Estate on its website as "coming soon".

Title deeds show Mr Voci's company River Hills Estate 4 Pty Ltd placed a caveat on the property in July 2016. The caveat is a purchaser's contract with the owners of the property, Bruce Birthisel and Alexis Edwards, who have owned it since 2005. Mr Voci was contacted for comment, but had not replied by the time of publication.

The acquisition follows Dahua acquiring two Wollert sites in November covering 56.4 hectares and 57.2 hectares, with the potential to develop 1400 land lots.

Led by managing director William Huang, Shanghai-based Dahua stamped its mark on the Melbourne market when it spent a whopping \$360 million in December 2016 to acquire three residential development sites in one of the biggest house-and-land plays in the city's history.

The three sites on Aviation, Point Cook and Hacketts roads in Point Cook in the Wyndham growth area offer the potential for more than 3000 housing lots to be developed in one of Melbourne's most sought-after new housing suburbs.

In March, The Australian Financial Review reported that Dahua was one of the developers chasing one of Melbourne's biggest housing projects - the 482-hectare Jubilee Estate in Wyndham Vale, being developed by Peter Bozzo's Lotus Living.

In an interview with the Financial Review in 2017, Mr Huang said the developer was committed to Australia for the long term and was well prepared for any funding or regulation changes.

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