

Cairns Post

SE News
HD **Aquis gets green light for licence**
BY NICK DALTON
WC 713 words
PD 27 May 2014
SN The Cairns Post
SC CAIRPO
ED Cairns
PG 4
LA English
CY © 2014 News Limited. All rights reserved.

LP

nick.dalton@news.com.au **HONG KONG** tycoon Tony Fung has been promised a gaming licence for his \$8.15 **billion** Aquis casino and resort at Yorkeys Knob if all environmental, planning and gaming licencing approvals are met.

The Queensland Government has short-listed Aquis and the proposed \$7.5 **billion** Broadwater Marine Project on the **Gold** Coast as the two projects able to proceed to the next stage of development.

TD

Deputy Premier and State Development, Infrastructure and Planning Minister Jeff Seeney said it was another milestone in the delivery of up to two new world-class integrated resort developments in regional Queensland.

"Today I can announce the proposed \$8.15 **billion** Aquis integrated resort development at Yorkey's Knob in Cairns will be able to receive a gaming licence if the project proceeds and meets all the necessary environmental, planning and gaming licencing approvals," he told The Cairns Post.

Mr Seeney said the Fung family would now be invited to put forward more details about their development to the government.

"The government has identified that this project has the greatest capacity to deliver the state's requirements for an integrated resort development in the regions, particularly its potential to attract interstate and international tourists," he said.

"The **company** has indicated this development could create over 3700 jobs during peak construction and more than 10,000 ongoing operational jobs.

"It is on this basis the government will now invite Aquis to submit a detailed proposal as part of the next phase of our competitive bid process." Mr Seeney said Aquis had clearly demonstrated its commitment to achieving public support in the Cairns region and the **company** was progressing with its environmental and planning approvals.

"Aquis has shown its commitment to Cairns through the proposed **purchase** of the Reef Casino, which is due to be finalised later this year and has expressed it is keen to start construction of the Yorkeys Knob development as soon as possible," he said.

"Aquis can now refine its development proposal with greater certainty of government support about the casino element of their proposal, subject to the resolution of a range of outstanding project issues." Mr Seeney said in October last year the government decided that up to two casino licences would be offered in the Expression of Interest (EOI) process to "encourage the provision of world-class integrated resorts in regional Queensland".

"We promised to grow the construction and tourism sectors of the Queensland economy and today's announcement paves the way for this to happen in Far North Queensland," he said.

Mr Seeney said the other four regional EOI participants submitted proposals that were only in the early stages of development and their projects needed a considerable amount of work before they could meet the criteria set down for this process.

“A number of projects faced challenges such as lack of access to an international airport, which meant they could not operate internationally competitive resorts or boost international visitor numbers to Queensland,” he said.

“That said, the Queensland Government is happy to continue to work with them to progress their projects.” The plan is for the resort to sit on a 40ha island with internal lagoons and surrounded by a 33ha lake with two casinos, a convention centre in the middle and eight hotel towers on the edges of the island. An 18-hole golf course will surround the lake.

On the corner of Dunne and Yorkeys Knob roads will be an AFL-cricket oval, soccer and rugby fields and netball courts.

Further south along Yorkeys Knob Rd are a golf driving range, tennis courts, an equestrian centre and an archery field, with a large 3000-space staff car park. The first stage, expected to start in May next year, is \$5.05 billion, with a late 2018 completion date. It will include four hotel towers of 4000 rooms, one casino, a 23,000sq m convention and expo centre, a 2500 seat theatre, 6100sq m of retail space, a 2250sq m aquarium, landscaping, lagoons, pools and a water feature covering 110,000sq m. The initial stage will require a workforce of 3750 people and be staffed by 11,000 people. Stage 2 would be from 2020-2024.

IN i97912 : Gambling Industries | ilea : Leisure/Arts/Hospitality
NS gcat : Political/General News
RE austr : Australia | queensl : Queensland | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania
PUB News Ltd.
AN Document CAIRPO0020140526ea5r00030