

SE News
 HD \$500m theme park DA
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Wyong Shire is set to become the theme park centre of NSW after stage one plans for a \$500 million Chinese development at Warnervale were unveiled on Monday.

The owners of the proposed Chinese Cultural Theme Park have developed extensive plans for a Chinese-themed tourist attraction on a 15ha site purchased from Wyong Council for \$10 million.

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Wyong mayor Doug Eaton received plans which will form part of the Development Application for the first stage of the park – the thanksgiving Temple – which includes three main buildings and statues of White-robed Guanyin and Thousand-hand Guanyin.

Due to open in stages from the end of 2015, if approved, the theme park will have 12 main sections including the Meridian Gate, thanksgiving Temple, Zheng He's Treasure Ship, arts and crafts workshop, Spring Festival Square and Panda Paradise.

The park, to be called Chappypie China Time, aims to integrate Chinese culture, nature and spirit.

Visitors will enter via The Red Gate and through to the Forbidden City, with a flying golden dragon winding its way through the park.

A variety of entertainment, cultural, accommodation and retail areas are included such as a history of calligraphy, a theatre for traditional drama and musical performances, Chinese landscape gardens, and a panorama of Chinese history.

Other features include: ■ Small laneways leading to various arts and handicrafts displays, Chinese food and teahouses; ■ A river flowing throughout the park with traditional dragon boats that will pass under bridges and willow trees; and ■ A giant ship which will be both a ride and a celebration of shared maritime history between Australia and China.

Original plans to include a giant golden Buddha as a central feature have been scrapped.

CHINESE FAITH Council sold the land, which is adjacent to the Warnervale Airport, to the Australia-China Theme Park Pty Ltd in 2012.

CEO of Australia-China Theme Park Bruce Zhong said the Mayor of Wyong was willing to back his company when no one else would.

"The Mayor understands Chinese culture and the need for local government involvement in terms of attracting Chinese investment and now the results are in for everyone to see," he said.

Mayor delighted by park's potential Mayor Doug Eaton said it was incredibly exciting to get to the stage of lodging a Development Application and to see the sheer scale of the project.

"I've truly never seen anything like this before – it's going to blow people away when they watch the video and get a sense of how big and imaginative this concept really is and what it can do in terms of tourism for our shire," he said.

"The developers have long been telling us that this theme **park** will be up there with the Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge in terms of tourist attractions and I've got to hand it to them – it's absolutely in that category.

"I think what you see today is just the beginning. Wyong Shire is now set to become the theme **park** centre of NSW." The mayor said that the project represented an incredible boost for the shire's tourism and economic development and would not only create employment but have a flow-on effect to local retailers and the hospitality sector.

AT A GLANCE Inbound **Chinese** tourism to Australia has steadily increased in the past few years, with 700,000 tourists spending more than \$4 billion in 2012, according to a report by Tourism Australia. With **Chinese** tourism growing by an average of 20 per cent each year, Destination NSW's **China** Tourism Strategy predicts that the value of **Chinese** inbound tourism to NSW will almost double by 2020, becoming NSW's largest international market.

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