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HD **Kewarra gets a kickstart**
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FORMER dotcom entrepreneur Sean Howard is forging ahead with a \$100 million retirement village, aged-care facility and **residential estate** at Kewarra Beach.

The project is back on the books after the **sale** of the resort, land and the development proposal to **Chinese** investor Benny Wu fell through.

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Resort general manager Mark Carrette said it was business as usual for the resort and Mr Howard's original plans. "The resort is not for **sale** ... it's still in his (Mr Howard's) hands," he said.

Mr Carrette said a business plan involving the resort, the aged-care facility and the retirement village was being adhered to. He said development approvals and licences were in place.

"It's still moving along. It's waiting for the land sell off," Mr Carrette said.

He said the start of the retirement and aged-care projects was subject to the **sale** of 24ha in Cottesloe Drive being **sold** by the Castalia **Group** head office in Melbourne.

Mr Carrette said there was development approval for 170 **residential** blocks on the **site**.

He said the land was in the process of going to market for expressions of interest.

Mr Carrette said construction of the aged-care and retirement developments was unlikely to start this year and a timetable had yet to be determined.

When Mr Howard announced the aged-care and retirement project three years ago, it was expected about 60 subcontractors and trades would be hired with the 95-bed federally funded aged-care facility employing 120 full-time staff at its peak.

At the time he said the aim was to lure cashed-up "empty nesters" from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane to retire in the Far North. He said the Kewarra Retirement Village would combine the resort with the aged-care centre and the **residential estate**.

It is understood Mr Wu, a **Hong Kong**-based multimillionaire, is concentrating on his other **purchases** in the Far North, including Double **Island**, which he bought off Mr Howard for an undisclosed sum in November, 2012.

It was listed for \$8 million. Mr Wu had planned to spend \$10 million upgrading the **island** resort.

Last year he bought the Acacia Court **Hotel** on the city's Esplanade with plans to extend the **property** to an adjacent block of land and Whitfield House, which operates as a high-end wedding and function centre with four suites adjoining Flecker Botanic Gardens.

It is expected to eventually become Mr Wu's family home.Mr Carrette said in the meantime there were plans to renovate the Kewarra Beach Resort in the next two years after a \$1.9 million upgrade three years ago.

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