

HD Wanda planning theme park in Australia Wanda planning theme park in Australia
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 A Wanda Plaza in Yichang, Hubei province. [Photo provided to China Daily]

[Dalian Wanda Group Co.](#), China's largest commercial real estate developer, is in talks with the Australian government for the construction of a theme park on the Gold Coast, in Queensland.

"Wanda wants to set up a theme park on the Gold Coast, but the project is still under negotiations with the local government," Xie Hong, Wanda's general manager, said in an interview with the *Coast Bulletin* newspaper.

The diversified conglomerate had identified tourism as a major growth area for it in the long term. If the plan is approved, Wanda will invest several billions of dollars on the large theme park and a tourist resort in the Coomera area on the Gold Coast.

Wanda officials were not immediately available for comment.

Investments in the entertainment industry and the acquisition of tourist spots overseas have been a primary focus for Wanda recently. Earlier this year, it said it was aiming at surpassing Disney Co as the world's largest tourism enterprise by 2020, and targeting an annual tourism income in excess of 100 billion yuan (\$16.1 billion).

The Gold Coast, a coastal city in southeastern Queensland, has been a top priority for the Chinese company thanks to its beautiful landscape and good infrastructure.

"The Gold Coast is the theme park capital of Australia and so the location is ideal," said James Laurenceson, deputy director of the Australia-China Relations Institute at the University of Sydney. "We can expect to see more Chinese investment in entertainment industries and other tourism infrastructure such as hotels."

Wanda has even partly funded the direct flights operated by Australian low-cost airline [Jetstar Airways Pty Ltd](#) from Wuhan in Hubei province to the Gold Coast to facilitate the growing number of Chinese travelers to the region.

Flights from Wuhan to the Gold Coast, which started operating in September, are expected to double to four a week in the near future thanks to growing interest from Chinese travelers.

Doubling the flights would bring tens of thousands more Chinese tourists to the Gold Coast every year, according to local media reports.

"Wuhan, and indeed more broadly Central China, provides significant growth opportunity for tourism to the Gold Coast, and together with our partnership with Wanda Group, we look forward to capitalizing on this opportunity," Gordon Price, director of the International Gold Coast Tourism Corporation told China Daily in an e-mail.

Last year, international visitor expenditure reached a record high of \$1.1 billion on the Gold Coast, thanks to a 6.2 percent increase in foreign travelers, according to data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

"China continues to be the Gold Coast's largest international market, with 212,000 Chinese visitors to the city in 2014, up 13 percent from a year earlier," said Miles Roper, chief executive of the Gold Coast Tourism Bureau.

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CO dwgrcl : Dalian Wanda Group Company Limited

IN i8396 : Diversified Holding Companies | ibcs : Business/Consumer Services

NS gtour : Travel | gcat : Political/General News | glife : Living/Lifestyle

RE austr : Australia | china : China | hubei : Hubei | apacz : Asia Pacific | asiaz : Asia | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | bric : BRICS Countries | chinaz : Greater China | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | Developing Economies | easiaz : Eastern Asia

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