

SE Business  
 HD **Big deals make up for lower volumes**  
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MORE than \$2.35 billion worth of hotels are expected to change hands this year, but **transaction** volumes are well down on previous years.

A report from Savills Hotels says 2014 **transaction** volumes were 22.5 per cent down on 2013 figures, although a number of high-price landmark establishments **sold** during the year.

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Apart from the recent \$463 million **sale** of the Sheraton on the **Park Hotel** in Sydney to **China's** Sunshine Insurance **Group**, other big deals this year were the \$360m **sale** of the Sofitel **Hotel** Darling **Park** in Sydney to private hotelier Jerry Schwartz and the \$135m **sale** of the **Park** Hyatt Melbourne **Hotel**.

Led by Perth, national **hotel** occupancies jumped to 80.9 per cent in October, up from 79.2 per cent in the previous year.

Perth achieved the highest **hotel** occupancies in October, averaging 89.7 per cent, followed by Sydney and Melbourne both achieving 87.4 per cent, and Adelaide with 85.7 per cent, according to STR Global.

The Savills Hotels report says the emerging Asian middle class with its thirst for overseas travel, coupled with improved domestic business conditions, was benefiting the Australian **hotel** sector.

French hotelier Accor, meanwhile, continues to expand its network, yesterday announcing it would rebrand the 109-room Four Points Sheraton Geelong as the Novotel Geelong and the 223-room Chifley **Hotel** Penrith as the Mercure Penrith.

Accor is focusing on regional areas because of new infrastructure projects planned, including Badgerys Creek Airport in Sydney's west. "Areas such as Geelong and Penrith have been targeted for major infrastructure projects that will attract both significant business travel as well as larger local populations as a result of increased work opportunities and proximity to Melbourne and Sydney respectively," Accor Pacific COO Simon McGrath said.

The InterContinental Hotels **Group**, the world largest, also recently announced it would manage the former Rydges Hotel **site** in the heart of Perth. Owned by an Asian investor, the 240-room **hotel** will open as an Inter-Continental by early 2017. Big regional **hotel** sales during the year included the \$48m **sale** of the Novotel Northbeach **Hotel** in Wollongong, south of Sydney.

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