

SE PrimeSpace
HD **Langham Hotels on the prowl for Aussie assets**

BY LISA ALLEN, HOTELS

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THE **Hong Kong**-based Langham Hotels will more than triple its size to 100 hotels within the next five years, with an Australian resort on the Queensland coast and a city property in Perth in its sights.

Langham Hotels new chief executive, American hotel executive, Bob Warman has also recently announced the \$30 **million** upgrade of the Langham Hotel in Sydney, which was acquired by the group for \$40m in 2012.

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"We want to be in locations which may not make sense for our parent **company**, (but) we need to be in those locations," Mr Warman told The Australian.

"We would love to be in Perth." Langham has 22 hotels operating globally — half of which are fully owned by the group — with another 10 under construction or recently signed up in cities such as Washington DC, Jakarta and Dubai.

Australia has not been forgot on Langham's aggressive **acquisition** spree, which will be negotiated entirely by signing management agreements with hotel owners and not by **acquisition** of bricks-and-mortar hotels.

However, the **Hong Kong**-listed Langham, which is majority-owned by Great Eagle held by the wealthy Lo family, remains committed to the ownership and operation of Langham hotels in this region including Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland.

Langham wants to capture more international tourists who stay at its Langham properties in Sydney and Melbourne with a resort offering on the **Gold** Coast, which like Perth would also be operated via a management agreement.

Mr Warman, who signed off on the decision to close the Langham Sydney for four months from next week for renovation, will meet with a Perth building owner tomorrow to discuss converting a building into a Langham Hotel — the first property for the group in Western Australia.

Since his appointment in March, replacing former chief executive, Australian Brett Butcher, Mr Warman and his team have overseen negotiations to develop a Langham in Jakarta, Washington DC and a hotel in Dubai in the Palm Jumeirah precinct — the brand's first Middle Eastern property.

Previously with the Ritz Carlton group, Mr Warman added more than 30 hotels to that chain from 1983 to 2001.

Mr Warman revealed Langham Hotels would also fully disclose plans for its new Eaton hotel brand, which operate in **Hong Kong** and Toronto, in October and was keen to introduce it to Australia. In Sydney, the Langham hotel in Kent Street has enjoyed an average occupancy rate of 87 per cent.

Meanwhile, the outlook for international arrivals, particularly from Asia, continues to grow with Deloitte Access Economics upwardly revising its visitor arrivals forecasts by more than 5 per cent over the next three years.

"The continued growth of low-cost Asian airline capacity and the economic recovery under way in the United Kingdom and United States has contributed to visitor arrivals surging 8.2 per cent over the year to May, the fastest rate of growth in nearly a decade," Deloitte Access Economics said.

"What was particularly encouraging for Australia's leisure market is that this growth was primarily driven by international holidaymakers." Malaysian, **Hong Kong** and Singapore visitors led the growth while **China**'s market grew a further 12 per cent in the year to May.

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