

HD Offshore buyers snap up Melbourne landmarks

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Sold: Australia 108 (artist's impression).

Singaporean developer World Class Land, a subsidiary of Aspial Corporation, has confirmed it paid \$42.3million for the Southbank tower Australia 108 hotel and apartment complex in Melbourne. It is the latest sale to overseas interests and agents are expecting more deals, boosted by the lower Australian dollar and favourable financing conditions. On Wednesday, the private Chinese investor Fu Wah International made its first significant foray into the local Australian property market with the purchase of Melbourne's landmark Park Hyatt hotel.

It was understood the price paid was about \$135 million, but the agents declined to comment.

The new owners of Australia 108 have an approval to build up to 312metres, after the project was forced to scale back from 388 metres to avoid the emergency flight path into Essendon airport. The chief executive of Aspial, Wee Seng Koh, said his group was reviewing plans, which originally included apartments, a hotel and some retail. He was still interested in a mixed-use aspect of the project. People who have registered interest in an Australia 108 apartment will be contacted with an update on designs for the tower once plans are advanced. If the site includes a hotel there will be about 450 apartments, but excluding a hotel there will be nearly

700 apartments, and it will be the tallest residential tower in Melbourne. "We are very pleased with our purchase of this premium site, which adds to the development portfolio in Australia we have already acquired. We plan to continue to develop Australia 108 as Melbourne's tallest and most significant residential and commercial tower, with a launch planned for 2014," MrKoh said. The deal received Foreign Investment Review Board approval on January 20, and settlement will take place on March 24. The sale was negotiated by selling agents Mark Wizel and Josh Rutman, of CBRE Melbourne City

Sales, who acted for the vendors. "Several major site transactions were negotiated in 2013 on the city fringe which represent the maturity of the Melbourne apartment market and the confidence that active, offshore-based developers now have in projects in non-CBD locations," Mr Wizel said. Offshore interest in Melbourne development prospects remained strong in 2013 with an estimated \$688 million in development sites changing hands, predominantly to Malaysian and Singaporean developers. This included Aspial Corp's purchase of an office building at 383 King Street, and multiple acquisitions by Singapore's Hiap Hoe.

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CO leehwa : Aspial Corporation Limited

IN i491 : Jewelry/Silverware | icnp : Consumer Goods

RE austr : Australia | melb : Melbourne | victor : Victoria (Australia) | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania

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