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HD Developing **Chinese** connections  
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A change to the migration law gave Ethan He and Charles Fan an idea

TWO **Chinese**-born locals have launched into the **property** development game spurred on by a change in the migration laws, with the pair sourcing development funds from **Chinese** investors wanting a permanent life in Australia.

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Off-the-plan project marketer Ethan He teamed with businessman Charles Fan to start Harman Global in May last year after realising a new investor migration visa introduced last year would allow them to undertake lucrative developments backed by capital from wealthy **Chinese**.

The new visa -- mandating that foreigners who invest more than \$5 million in Australia could receive permanent residency in five years, regardless of English language skills, education, and occupation -- has led to a surge in applications.

Backed by this tide of funds, Harman Global is completing an \$80m development in Sydney's northwestern Castle Hill, comprising 86 house and land packages, with much of the funding coming from **China**.

The **company** has also spent \$5m on a **site** in Kellyville, which has a development application lodged for 16 homes. Harman Global aims to invest about \$100m this year and is eyeing **apartment** developments, Mr He said.

The capital for the projects was provided by Mr He and Mr Fan's contacts, with the partners working on past business ventures with the investors. The developments have so far only being marketed to the partners' contacts.

Mr He said that one of the key selling points to **Chinese** investors was that, if they invested more than \$5m on Harman Global's Australian developments, then they could live in Australia in five years.

"I saw (the new migration laws) and thought: well that's where I can get my money from," Mr He said. "My background is in **China** and I have lots of **Chinese** connections and **Chinese** people are looking to move here. It was a great way for me to help build my business, not just as an agent, but as a developer."

Forty homes **sold** out in two hours in the first stage of sales at Castle Hill last November, with half **sold** to **Chinese** buyers. The next stage is due to be released next month.

Building freestanding homes has not been common among **Chinese** developers active in Australia, with Greenland Holdings **Group** building apartments after its entry to Australia last year..

"I wanted to build freehold homes because that's my dream. Because people in my generation, we moved to Australia with the hope of living in a freestanding house with space," Mr He said.

“Also living near a golf course is one of my dreams as well,” he said, noting that the Castle Hill development is adjacent to the local golf course.

Mr He, who came to Australia as a university student, was working as an agent, marketing Australian apartments to wealthy **Chinese**, on behalf of companies such as Colliers International and Meriton, while Mr Fan worked for a **Chinese** media **company**.

Mr He **sold** several Australian apartments to Mr Fan, who immigrated three years ago.

The **company** will build in other parts of Australia, but Sydney's northwest would be a focus because the area already attracted **Chinese** interest, Mr He said.

“It will be a hot area for **Chinese** migrants because in Norwest you have good education, you have Norwest Business **Park**, Castle Towers (shopping centre). You've got everything **Chinese** people like,” he said.

Ethan He learnt **property** sales from one of Australia's largest **apartment** moguls: Harry Triguboff. His description of Mr Triguboff is: “one word: tough.”

“Every week in the sales meeting was like a nightmare,” he said, before adding that the billionaire was one of his heroes.

Mr Fan spent 20 years working in the **Chinese** media. He eventually rose to become an executive producer and vice-president of the network Bojie. The network was in partnership with **China**'s largest network, the state-owned **China** Central Television (CCTV).

The **company** also offers migration advice to investors, providing a service which details the exact requirements and processes involved in moving to Australia.

Another branch of the business markets apartments to **Chinese** investors on behalf of major Australian companies, including Colliers International and Meriton.

**Chinese** offshore investment into Australian real **estate** grew by almost 60 per cent in the two years to 2013, with Foreign Investment Review **Board** figures showing that **Chinese property** investment during the 2011-12 financial year totalled \$4.2 billion. **China** is Australia's second-largest source of migrants.

The Bureau of Statistics says there were 18,030 long-term arrivals in the year to June.

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