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 HD **CBRE braces for new capital wave**
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COMMERCIAL property agent Chris Ludeman spends little time at his New York base. But there's good reason for the global president of capital markets for CBRE to be constantly on the move.

On his reading, a new wave of investors is washing up on US shores and many domestic firms are pushing into new territories.

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"I live in New York (though) I am elsewhere for 70 per cent of my business life," he says on a visit to Sydney. Next week will see him in Dubai and Berlin — areas where global capital is again flowing.

Mr Ludeman quips that he "follows the money" and that is to be expected as he leads a business active in virtually all areas of real **estate** advisory and investment.

CBRE was intermediary in about \$US170 billion of capital markets deals last year and this year is on track to top that.

"We'll be 20 per cent or more higher than that this year," he says. He puts the upswing down to the global economic recovery, which he says is moving at different speeds around the world, and **commercial** real **estate** attracting unprecedented capital.

Property yields have compressed in gateway markets, partly due to very low global interest rates, and the absence of an oversupply of empty towers and malls. "We have a singularly unique, positive perfect storm," Mr Ludeman says.

Investors are now chasing assets in smaller or secondary markets and capital is also looking at core and value-add opportunities, as well as some development plays, he says.

New money is finding it tough to break into what is an extremely competitive market. The veteran agent, with 34 years experience, notes the marked shift towards entity level **transactions** as private and public firms deploy the billions raised for **property** funds.

He keeps a close eye on private equity investors Starwood Capital, Lonestar and Blackstone **Group**, citing their ability to take risk and seize an advantage as first into markets.

Billions have been raised to invest in Europe, with Mr Ludeman flagging this as an area of interest. But the US will be just as busy says the man who helped take **Chinese group** Greenland Holding into a \$US1bn project in downtown LA last year. "That **Chinese** capital is incredibly ambitious; they really want to take their place on the world stage," he says.

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