



## STARWOOD BRINGS \$100M WESTIN RESORT TO THE SUNSHINE COAST

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

21 June 2016 | *The Financial Review* | Larry Schlesinger

Starwood will open a new five-star, \$100 million Westin hotel at Coolum on the Sunshine Coast by 2021 as part of a \$1 billion mixed-use development planned by Japanese real estate giant Sekisui House. It's the second new hotel announced by Starwood in the space of a week and takes its development pipeline to nine hotels in Australia, including two new Westins due to open in Perth and Brisbane in 2018.

Last week, Starwood announced it had partnered with Sekisui House and Frasers Property on a new \$150 million Four Points by Sheraton hotel at the \$2 billion Central Park development in Sydney.

The new 220-room Westin Coolum Resort & Spa will be the centrepiece of a mixed-use development comprising apartments, shops and restaurants on a 20-hectare site overlooking Yaroomba Beach. A portion of the site is already under development as The Coolum Residences featuring beachside lots and luxury houses.

Apart from guest accommodation, the resort will offer four dining venues, a spa with six treatment rooms, 850 square metres of conference and event space and direct access to the beach. It will be the first new five-star hotel built on the Sunshine Coast in 27 years, the last being Starwood's Sheraton Noosa, which has recently become the Sofitel Noosa Pacific Resort, managed by Accor.

Across the road from the new hotel site is the closed Palmer Coolum Resort, owned by mining magnate and politician Clive Palmer. Andrew Taylor, Starwood director of acquisitions and development, told the AFR the closure of former Hyatt Coolum had had a devastating effect on the local economy. "The new hotel will fill that void and create jobs," he said. Sekisui House first bought land at Coolum from Lend Lease in 2010. Earlier plans for a bigger development, including a 450-room luxury hotel, were opposed by the local community.

A new planning scheme will be lodged later this year. With acting Sunshine Coast mayor Tim Dwyer attending the signing of the Starwood-Sekisui agreement on Tuesday, it appears to have the support of the local council. "Our vision is to provide visitors to this popular family holiday destination with a relaxing, five-star wellness retreat and the Westin brand is an ideal fit for both the location and the development," said Toru Abe, chief executive and managing director of Sekisui House Australia.

The new hotel is a five-minute drive from the Sunshine Coast Airport, which will have a new international runway by 2020. Mr Taylor said visitor numbers coming through the airport were up strongly in recent years. Figures from researchers STR show hotel occupancies on the Sunshine Coast rose 12 percentage points to 66 per cent last year with room rates up 3.5 per cent to \$195 a night, lifting revenue per available room by 15 per cent.

**For more information contact**

Place Projects | [admin@placeprojects.com.au](mailto:admin@placeprojects.com.au) | (07) 3107 9223