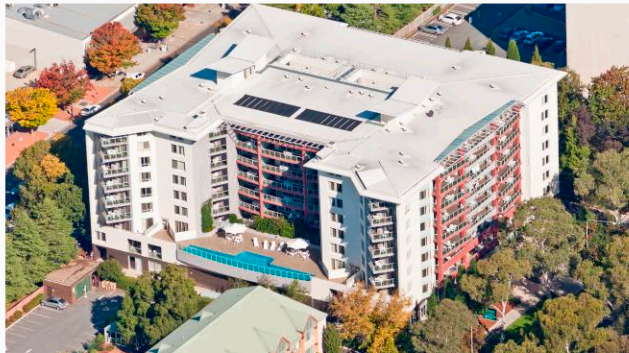


Joint venture snaps up Canberra's Clifton Suites hotel for \$65m

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LISA ALLEN



Property

Clifton Suites on Northbourne has sold to a joint venture between Perth-based Stephen Lauder's Facilitate and investment group Ascot Capital.

The 152-room serviced apartment hotel will be rebranded Pacific Suites Canberra and operated by the joint-venture parties.

This is the second deal for the pair that bought the Pacific Hotel in Cairns recently.

Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels and Hospitality agent Mark Durran, who sold the Canberra property, said the Perth-based joint-venture parties were looking for more hotels to add to their burgeoning hospitality portfolio. "They are a new buyer on the scene. They are owner-operators, (and) this asset in Canberra was sold by an owner-operator, the family backed Kappelle Pty Ltd, to an owner-operator," Mr Durran said. "They are putting together a portfolio. They are backed by a high-net-worth person in Perth. They club together high-net-worth West Australian-based people. This is one of the larger non-portfolio hotel transactions to occur in Canberra in many years."

Despite the lack of sales Mr Durran said the Canberra market was on the upswing with revenue per available room, the standard industry measure, growing by 10 per cent year to date over the same period last year, on the back of solid increases in both occupancy and average daily.

In a statement, Facilitate managing director Stephen Lauder said the opportunity to purchase such a well-located apartment-style hotel with vacant possession was an opportunity we had been seeking for some time.

"We view the Canberra hotel market as an attractive one to invest in as it is underwritten by corporate and government business with a large element of domestic tourism," Mr Lauder added. "The recent \$450m upgrade of the Canberra airport will attract increased direct international flights to Canberra, with Singapore Airlines the first to fly directly.

"Next focus will be securing direct flights from China."