

PILLOW FIGHTS TO BE ENCOURAGED AT RUBY RESORT

GREG STOLZ

AN ICE rink, water park, outdoor cinema, lavish kids' club and reinforced beds to encourage youngsters to jump around and have pillow fights – welcome to the Gold Coast's new \$1.4 billion family mega-resort.

The four-tower, five-star development taking shape in Surfers Paradise could later include a second Coast casino and is one of several long-term projects set to help the Glitter Strip avoid a post-Commonwealth Games hangover.

Called The Ruby Collection, the project has been named in honour of the 12-year-old daughter of wealthy Sydney developer William O'Dwyer.

Mr O'Dwyer's Ralan Group – named after his other daughters Rachel and Lauren – is developing the project on the site of the 35-year-old Paradise Resort, a popular holiday spot.

Details of the massive development were unveiled yesterday at a ceremony to mark the 12-month countdown until the opening of the first stage of The Ruby Collection, a 30-storey apartment tower in which all 230 units have already sold.

As well as the ice rink, water park, outdoor cinema and kids' club, attractions will include giant board games, magic shows, wandering mascots, and reinforced beds and lounges so young guests can bounce around and have pillow fights.

"We know that kids are going to be jumping up and down on the lounge suites and having pillow fights and we've allowed for it," Ruby chief executive David Brook said.

Mr O'Dwyer said he saw tourism as Australia's next "iron ore", and he had so much confidence in the Gold Coast, he was investing "my daughters' inheritance" in the city.

He has also bought another development site next to The Ruby and said he wouldn't rule out vying for a second Gold Coast casino licence after the Palaszczuk Government last month ruled out a casino planned on the Southport Spit by Chinese consortium ASF.

TOURISM BOUNCE: The Ruby apartments resort will encourage holidaying kids to have fun and jump on the beds and lounges.



Rebuilding paradise gets fast-tracked

SARAH VOGLER EXCLUSIVE

THE multimillion-dollar redevelopment of one of Queensland's most exclusive island resorts will be given priority status by the State in a bid to fast-track the project.

Tourism Minister Kate Jones will announce today that the \$100 million redevelopment of Hayman Island will be given prescribed project status to enable the development application to be hastened.

"We are going to fast-track the approval process for Hayman Island," Ms Jones said.

"It will get prescribed project status which will allow the Coordinator-General to assist to fast track approvals."

The project is expected to create more than 400 jobs for the region.

Ms Jones (pictured) will

make the announcement in an address to the Queensland Media Club today.

The move comes as the Whitsundays region continues to get back on its feet after the fury of Cyclone Debbie.

New national tourism statistics released yesterday show Queensland attracted 21.5 million domestic visitors in the year to June, up 6.2 per cent on the previous 12 months.

Those visitors spent \$15.4 billion – a 5.5 per cent jump – according to the National Visitor Survey.

Whitsundays Mayor Andrew Wilcox said the Hayman Island redevelopment would

"transform the Whitsundays".

"We have done it tough this year but our community has shown great resilience," Cr Wilcox said.

"Now this is elevated to the Coordinator-General these projects will be fast-tracked which will speed up the recovery in the Whitsundays."

"That means more jobs for our local tradies and a brand new tourism product to entice visitors," he said.



Techy parents to watch over their kids

ANXIOUS parents may soon have another way to keep track of wayward children, with an Australian company preparing to launch a kids' smartwatch that combines a phone and GPS tracker.

ASX-listed MGM Wireless says its Spacetalk children's 3G GPS smartwatch will be on the market next month, after 18 months of testing in the Adelaide Hills.

MGM Wireless chief execu-

tive officer Mark Fortunatow said the \$429 device kept parents and children in constant Dick Tracy-style contact via a two-way tracker.

It can also follow a child's movements and alert parents when they wander out of pre-designated safe spaces such as school or home.

"Your child can make and receive calls from a set of contacts you choose; a customised SOS alert function messages

guardians in an emergency; and when a child is wearing Spacetalk, parents can see their location on their smartphone," Mr Fortunatow said.

MGM Wireless announced to the ASX yesterday that the device's first production run was complete, and the shipment was due in Australia later this month.

Online sales are scheduled to begin in early October on the company's website.

Today another 35 people will be told they have blood cancer.

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