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- **Paragon** is a three-way joint development featuring luxury apartments
- **Close** to 90% sales for project which features a first-of-its-kind indoor forest



by **Ang Hui Hsien**

Boosted by the success of their first project in Melbourne, Fajarbaru Builder Group Bhd and Beulah International have teamed up once again for their second project, Paragon, in the Australian state capital – this time with the addition of KHK Group of Companies.

Located in the city's central business district (CBD), the mixed development is led by Melbourne-based Beulah International which holds the majority stake of 42.78% while KHK and Fajarbaru hold 35% and 22.22%, respectively.

Carrying a gross development value (GDV) of A\$200 mil (RM604 mil), the 48-floor project features 227 luxury apartments selling from A\$480,000. It is learned that close to 90% of the units has been sold.

Beulah International believes the overwhelming response to the units negates concerns regarding oversupply of apartments in the CBD of Victoria's capital.

Its managing director Chan Jiaheng reveals that around 30% of the sales come from Malaysian buyers and that they are targeting for the project to be fully sold out by the end of construction, estimated to be between the end of Q3 and early Q4 of 2020.

"We are targeting everyone in the world because of Melbourne's reputation as the world's most liveable city, so we have customers from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Southeast Asia and local Australians as well," he says.

Melbourne was voted as the top-ranked among 140 cities around the world last year in an annual global liveability survey conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit – an honour it has held for the seventh year running.

Unique features

Designed by international firm Fender Katsalidis Architects and landscaper Paul Bangay, Paragon was named the Best Residential High-rise Development for Australia at the Asian Pacific Property Awards 2018-2019.

The building takes inspiration from the site's – which was the home of Australia's first Irish club, Celtic Club – heritage with an exterior that features artisan metalwork in a Celtic-inspired pattern across curtains of glass.

Occupied by four to six apartments, each floor is designed in such a way that most of the units are corner vistas

A partnership Down Under



Paragon comprises 227 luxury apartments in Melbourne's CBD

"We believe that the Australian property development will continue to provide a healthy income for Fajarbaru in the coming years, driven by growing demand for Australian properties from the influx of new arrivals and the local market for high-quality properties." – Kuan

with expansive views.

Its main attraction, however, is its elevated indoor urban forest hailed as the first of its kind. Its three-storey height allows for tall trees to be brought in.

The forest is described as "a conservatory-like feature with a carefully composed selection of mature trees, leafy canopies, climbing gardens and grassy spaces complete with refined terrazzo pavers and outdoor seating zones."

The gym, pool and residential entertaining areas situated on the

two amenities level are purposefully positioned to be exposed to the view of the indoor forest.

KHK managing director and CEO Jo Jo Kong believes this feature, as well as its low-density nature, have been instrumental in Paragon's success.

"There is not a particular high-rise in Melbourne that has an indoor forest so that is definitely a unique selling point whether it's towards local or overseas buyers, and I would say that that is one of the key determinants. Additionally, it is one of the



Chan says the project targets buyers from all around the world



We believe the Australian market will continue to provide a healthy income, says Kuan



There is no high-rise in Melbourne that has an indoor forest, says Kong

both Beulah International and Fajarbaru on Gardenhill.

Both property developers are planning to venture into their third project together, which Chan reveals will involve the construction of 13 to 21 townhouses averaging A\$2 mil on a piece of land in Northcote, also in Melbourne.

In a statement released to Bursa Malaysia in April last year, Fajarbaru announced its purchase of a 49% stake in Beulah Northcote Land Pty Ltd, which was granted the development rights to the 0.5ha land.

KHK is also no stranger to Melbourne's property scene, having partnered with Beulah International for Fawcner House in South Yarra which consists of 10 high-end apartments, including a A\$16 mil penthouse.

Commenting on the opportunity to work together once again, Kong says: "Melbourne has strong fundamentals for investment and therefore, we are thrilled to partner with Beulah International and proud to be part of the award-winning development at the CBD of Melbourne."

Moving forward

With three projects in Malaysia – specifically in Sentul, Puchong and Melaka – under its belt, Kuan reveals that Fajarbaru also has its sights set on developing in foreign playgrounds.

"We (Fajarbaru) are always on the lookout for good projects overseas, be it Australia or any other parts of Southeast Asia, so we might venture outside of Melbourne in future. There have been a few offers coming our way, but everything is in the deliberation stage at this point," he says.

He remains optimistic when it comes to the Australian market. "We believe that the Australian property development will continue to provide a healthy income for Fajarbaru in the coming years, driven by growing demand for Australian properties from the influx of new arrivals and the local market for high-quality Australian properties."

Beulah International's Chan concurs when it comes to the strength of the property sector in Melbourne, as evident from measures put in place by the government and vacancy rates in the city's homes.

"It's relatively strong, so much so that the government has imposed stamp duties on foreigners to soften the growth of the market, but even with that, it is still growing steadily.

"The residential market is also strong as can be seen from the vacancy rate in Melbourne which is at an all-time low of 2%," he states.

When asked about the likelihood of Beulah International venturing out of the country, Chan does not dismiss the possibility though he also states that the developer's focus in the short to immediate term will continue to be Australia. [www](#)

few in Melbourne that is a low-density high-rise," she notes.

Familiar faces

The Paragon project marks the second partnership between Fajarbaru and Beulah International, with the first being the Gardenhill project, comprising luxurious one- and two-bedroom apartments in Doncaster.

Fajarbaru group executive director Datuk Seri Eric Kuan expresses his excitement at partnering up with Beulah International once again following the completion of their first joint project, which was completed early last year and has a GDV of A\$77 mil.

The success of their maiden collaboration has helped in securing a A\$100 mil funding facility for Paragon from Malayan Banking Bhd which also partnered with