



Lang Walker had a stellar year that saw him climb four spots to 14th on the Financial Review Rich List. PHOTO: LOUIE DOUVIS

Walker, the money-making machine

Exclusive

Fiona Carruthers

Even on a near-deserted island in the South Pacific, Lang Walker is finding new ways to make money.

The veteran Rich Lister and chief executive of Walker Development Corporation has enjoyed another phenomenal year: a 34 per cent rise in his wealth to \$4.67 billion has seen him climb four spots to rank 14th on the 2019 Financial Review Rich List. A prescient pivot away from residential apartment developments and towards office towers has been the key driver. But his luxurious Kokomo Private Island resort in Fiji is also paying unexpected dividends.

When Walker bought the 57-hectare Yaukuve island in 2011 to create his \$120 million new-build Kokomo, he got a few spare islands around it thrown

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into the deal. The resort, which features 21 beachfront villas and four dramatic clifftop residences, opened in March 2017 and Walker quickly got around to putting one of his "spare" islands to work.

"Not long after Kokomo opened, we heard the production team behind the long-running [reality television show] *French Survivor* was looking for a new base in Fiji," Walker explains over the roar of the engine on his Riviera fishing boat as he circles the island in question, Buliya.

And so, with no experience in the movie business, he decided to use it to

Who missed the cut

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build the French a "cinema city" in paradise.

Since January 2018, Walker's team has put in sealed roads, 90 one-bedroom accommodation units and 20 houses fit for "heads-of-department", along with a large restaurant and bar, a boat marina and sizeable film production facilities including video editing suites.

Now in its 18th season, *French Survivor* (known in France as *Koh-Lanta: Fidji*) is a spin-off of the original **Continued p10**

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