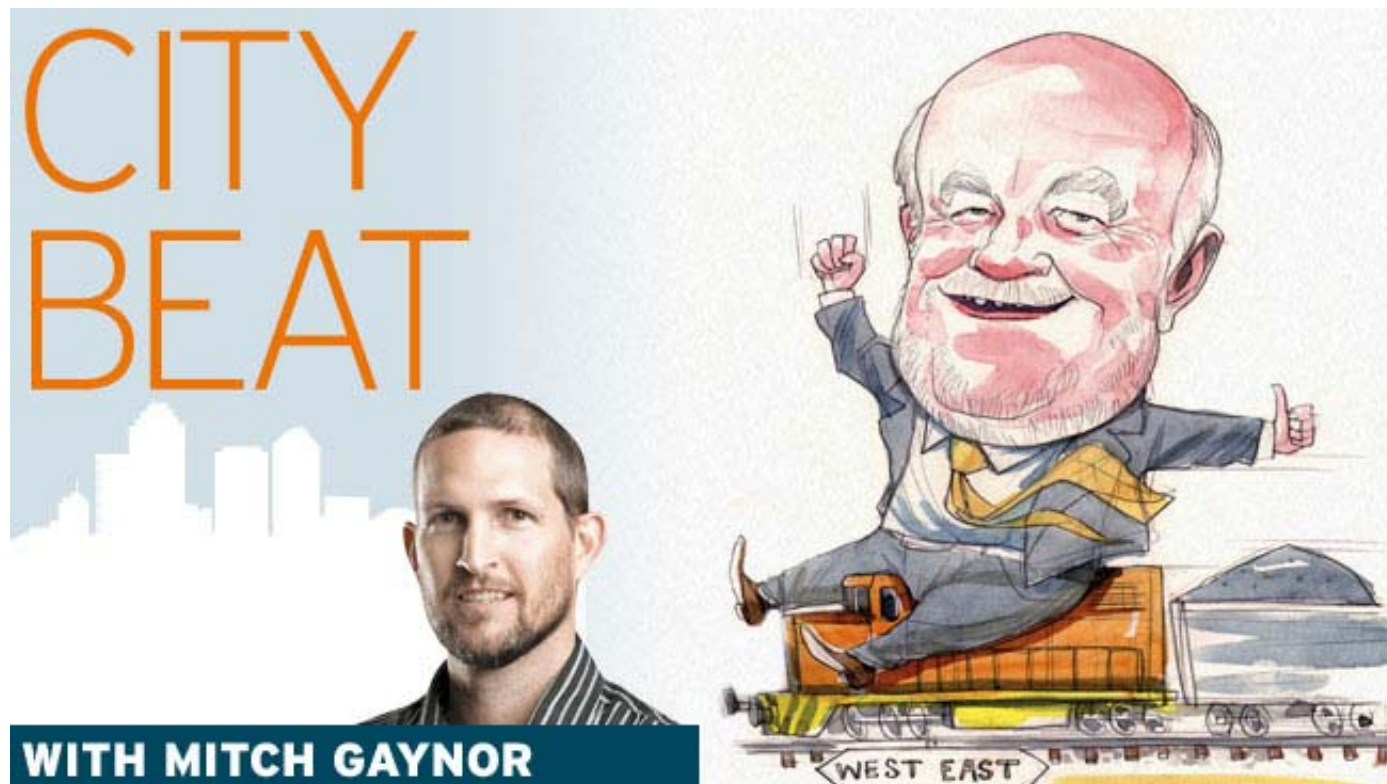


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CityBeat for iPad only

East-west link makes tracks

- by: Mitch Gaynor
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IT SEEMS the folks behind the proposed transcontinental rail line project connecting Australia's east and west coast are starting to build up a head of locomotive steam.

Project Iron Boomerang boss Shane Condon is in the Whitsunday region this week, hosting an international heavyweight delegation of steel industry leaders from the United Kingdom and Tokyo.

The energetic Condon who honed his business skills as a pioneer seafood and beef exporter in the Northern Territory is escorting executives from UK-based Tata Steel and Tokyo's Nomura Research Institute around the proposed site for a massive new steel manufacturing complex at Abbot Point incorporating a Bowen based integrated support town of 40,000 plus.

Condon and his team have been beavering away behind the scenes and have been briefing a range of key stakeholders about Project Iron Boomerang, including a recent collaborative signing ceremony

Stay tuned for some expected strong support from the Coalition and the Northern Territory government in the lead up to the federal election.

Full field of fans

HORSES can pull carts - and crowds - it seems. The premiere of Cavalia last night drew a who's who of corporates, sports types and entertainers.

Spied in the VIP Rendezvous lounge was Brisbane Roar CEO Sean Dobson, new head of Leisure Tourism Anne Maree Moon, Brisbane Marketing's Shane Rogers, Il Centro's Andy Georges, Tourism and Events Qld CEO Stephen Wright, Jones Lang LaSalle's Geoff McIntyre, Dean Merlo, QPAC CEO John Kotzas, Brisbane Lions CEO Malcolm Holmes and BT Hotels' Steve Hammond.

Goss doing well

WAYNE Goss is out of hospital and by all accounts in great shape following an operation to remove a brain tumour last Wednesday. The former premier is no stranger to the surgeon's table having had similar operations in 1997 and 2002 after which he fully recovered.

XMC marks spot

CHINESE state-owned enterprise Xuzhou Coal Mining Group Corporation (XMC) launched their Australian operations at the Queensland Club yesterday promising to respect everything about the "beautiful, free and wealthy country of Australia". Great news that.

XMC purchased nearly 4000 sq km of coal exploration leases from Cokal. Cokal boss Peter Lynch said his company was now focusing firmly to its Indonesian and East Africa operations.

City Beat reckons idiosyncratic politician Kevin Rudd might have been on to something by learning Mandarin with the official speeches being literally lost in translation at times. The diligent interpreter at one stage tripped over Mines Minister Andrew Cripps's speech. "That was a very long sentence," she told him after struggling to interpret one particularly wordy monologue.

Also at the event were SAS operatives including Larry Anthony as well as XMC chairman Huang Xinhai.

Now, Sir Richard ...

IF you could ask one of the world's best-known millionaire entrepreneurs a question, what would it be? Virgin founder and aspiring astronaut Sir Richard Branson is Brisbane-bound and the University of Queensland, which is hosting him at a business lunch in May, is asking Queenslanders to submit a question via the website nextquestion.com.au.

Fellow online dwellers vote for their favourite question which will then be answered by the panel of "future business thinkers," including Sir Richard himself.

Cup even fuller

COFFEE king Phillip Di Bella has just picked up a new industrial unit in Sydney for a cool \$715,000 in a bid to expand his presence in NSW.

The property on Bourke Rd, Alexandria, will serve as the Di Bella Coffee's NSW head office.