

## ASIA



Nicholas Bloy

## Navis closes three deals across region \$175m aggregate value for Oz, Singapore deals

[Navis Capital Partners](#) has closed three deals within one week, for a total value of some \$175 million in equity commitments. The three control investments include one real estate and two industrial companies, in Australia and Singapore respectively.

According to [Nicholas Bloy](#), Director at Navis, the first deal was with Western Australia's National Lifestyle Villages: "a developer and operator of affordable communities for people in the 45-65

age bracket." Targeting "people who are too young, too fit, and too healthy for a traditional retirement village," the company has seven villages with 200-500 residents each, and another five in various stages of approval.

The second investment was in ECO, a leading Singaporean hazardous waste management company. "We are particularly excited about this investment because given Singapore's small size and exacting standards, ECO is truly

world-class in its waste management practices, and especially in its recovery/recycling capabilities," Bloy told *AVCJ*. "As environmental standards and enforcement in other Asian economies rise, we believe that ECO's expertise will enable the company to expand regionally, based on the process excellence and intellectual property it has developed domestically."

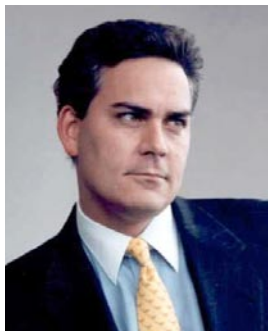
"The third investment is in one of our favourite investee companies, Mentor Media, which we took private as part of a consortium in a process that started in late 2005," Bloy continued (see *AVCJ*

*Feb 20, 2006*). Navis is buying out HSBC Private Equity, and Mulberry Partners, the other consortium members, enlarging its holding from 19% to 85%. Mentor is involved in kitting, configuration and logistics activities on behalf of global electronics manufacturers.

"It has been a very successful investment for all parties so far, and now requires some real focus and attention to migrate to a global platform," said Bloy.

Navis's recent activity comes on top of its regional buildout, which included new offices in India and Australia (see *AVCJ Nov 20, 2006*). -PSM

## AUSTRALIA



Gavin O'Reilly

## Independent leaves door open for leveraged JV with Carlyle, Providence Media deals makes headlines as CVC AP boosts stake in PBL assets

An Independent News and Media executive has hinted that the Dublin-based publisher's pursuit of APN News and Media is not over, despite the fact that minority shareholders voted against its private equity-backed A\$2.8 billion (\$2.3 billion) takeover offer.

It is thought that Independent, which owns 38.4% of the Sydney-based media company, may try to bypass shareholders by selling APN's operations into a leveraged joint venture with consortium members [Carlyle Group](#) and [Providence Equity Partners](#). A spokeswoman from Carlyle declined to comment to *AVCJ*.

Independent chief operating officer Gavin O'Reilly told Australian media

that he had witnessed "with great interest the Lazarus-like resurrection of deals down here." He did not rule out another attempted takeover of APN, which operates regional newspapers and radio stations in Australia.

The potential JV mirrors new developments in the Australian market outlined by *AVCJ* sources. Financial sponsors are looking at unconventional structures to complete deals, and if necessary, give institutional shareholders a stake in the outcomes. Last month, Brisbane-based travel agent Flight Center announced that it would sell its assets into a jointly owned venture with [Pacific Equity Partners](#). They had earlier attempted an MBO,

which was blocked by shareholders in February.

"You're seeing some very creative and constructive alternatives offered," one market source told *AVCJ*.

Independent's takeover bid was turned down by nine institutional investors, including Perpetual Investments, Australian Foundation Investment, Djerriwarrh Investments, and Mirrabooka Investments. The four Australian firms accounted for about 33% of the eligible votes that were cast. The offer – which was considered low by some shareholders – needed an acceptance level of 75% to succeed, but only secured approval from 51%. Independent, which owns 38.4% of APN,

was not allowed to vote. The proposal had the support of management.

Separately, [CVC Asia Pacific](#) has agreed to pay \$427 million to acquire a 25% stake in PBL Media, a 50:50 joint venture it founded last year with Sydney-based Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd (PBL). PBL Media holds several television, magazine and Internet assets of PBL.

Prior to the deal announcement, analysts estimated that the 25% shareholding was worth between \$330 million and \$410 million. PBL sold half of PBL Media to CVC AP for \$3.4 billion in October 2006. PBL has been reducing its interests in the media sector in order to raise funds to expand its casino operations. -YC