

Port Bouvard looks for new chiefs as assets up for sale

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Listed property developer Port Bouvard is searching for a new managing director as the company prepares to put all of its WA assets, with the exception of core developments at Point Grey in the Peel region and at Gidgegannup in the Perth Hills, on the block to pay off debt.

Port Bouvard said managing director Ross Neumann and chairman Michael Perrott would step down simultaneously from their positions next year as a part of a "strategic succession plan".

It is also believed the company would make an announcement by next week about a new buyer for the Port Bouvard Marina, three years after a deal to sell it to controversial entrepreneur John Kelly fell through, as well as potential deals for some of its other "non-core assets".

The futures of the Melros and Dawesville developments in the Peel region, the 20ha proposed canal development at Esperance and a hotel site near the company's Oceanique development in Mandurah, are all up in the air.

But Mr Perrott said potential asset sales did not mean the company was in any financial trouble.

"We're not in a fire sale, all we are doing is doing what we can in this market to make sure we're sound and secure and prudent,"



Departing: Ross Neumann has played a significant role in turning Port Bouvard into a major land developer.

Mr Perrott said. "We're OK."

Port Bouvard has been buying up land since it sold the last of its flagship Port Bouvard project in 2006 amid Perth's property boom and Mr Perrott said most of the company's assets could now potentially be sold off.

"We've got our core assets, one at Point Grey and one at Gidgegannup — they are our core projects and then we've got a number of other non-core projects," he said.

"We've got land at Melros, land at Furnissdale, land at Dawesville, land at Esperance and we've got hotel sites, the

marina ... it is those sorts of assets we are looking to sell."

Port Bouvard reported an 88 per cent drop in full-year net profit in the year to June 30 of \$3.2 million and axed its interim dividend in a year that saw its share price fall sharply.

The company's shares reached a high of \$4.29 in late 2006 amid Perth's property boom, but have fallen steeply since and closed at a six-year low of 26.5¢ following the news that Mr Neumann and Mr Perrott would step down.

Mr Neumann has been managing director since 1998 and played a significant role in

turning the company from mortgage originator, formerly known as Menzies Court Holdings, into a major land developer, based on its Mandurah development.

Mr Neumann and Mr Perrott are both big shareholders in the company, with Mr Perrott holding more than seven million units.

Mr Neumann sold \$125,000 worth of shares off market at 40¢ a share to non-executive director Rick Crabb during Friday's market rout as Port Bouvard's shares plunged to 30¢. Mr Neumann retains more than 14 million shares and two million options.