

# Family fortunes a risky

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## Children

John Stensholt

Succession planning is a vexed enough issue for the nation's wealthiest, even before considering whether it is a good idea for children to work in the family business or go it alone.

Several of the Rich List have their children working alongside them, like **Frank Lowy** with his three sons, Peter and Steven at **Westfield** and David managing the family's private investment vehicle LFG Holdings. Similarly, **David Hains**'s three eldest sons oversee different parts of the billionaire's investment firm Portland House Group, **Bruce Mathieson junior** is chief executive of ALH, the gaming company partly owned by his father, and **Lindsay Fox**'s sons are executives at his **Linfox** trucking and logistics empire.

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Max Beck, Property Developer

Others have taken different paths. **Ian Gandel**, son of shopping centre magnate **John**, has been investing in the mining sector for 20 years and poker machines billionaire **Len Ainsworth**'s children have a diverse range of pursuits including homewares, garden stores and a backpacker hotel.

Melbourne property developer **Max Beck** says a worry for many well-off individuals is what he calls "unearned arrogance". "There's some kids out there, children of the well-off, that seem to carry on like they made [the fortune] themselves. It isn't rampant but there are some out there like that, and it really annoys me." Beck believes the best



Max Beck believes it best to allow children to find their own feet. PHOTO: EDDIE JIM

advice wealthy fathers can give their children is to establish their own businesses, if they are that way inclined, rather than simply following in their footsteps straight away.

"They've got to do it to get their own self-esteem up, so they are out there building something themselves and learning from that. I'm willing to support them to do that and if they want to come back [to the family business]

later, that's fine. But it is good for them to run their own thing." One of Beck's children is now running Beck Property Group, which father Max provides "mentoring" advice to, while another runs his own plumbing and maintenance business. "I think that's a good thing, he's got his own worries about making sure people get paid and getting jobs and so on. He loves it, and I'm very happy for him."