

REUTERS ARTICLE:

UPDATE 1-Australia's Aristocrat Leisure H1 profit rises; digital revenue triples

Reuters Staff
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(Adds details of Aristocrat results)

May 24 (Reuters) - Australia's Aristocrat Leisure said on Thursday that its half-year net profit rose 2.8 percent, as it cashed in a casual gaming gamble with digital **revenue more than tripling for the period.**

Reported net profit after tax for the six months to March 31 rose to A\$256.5 million (\$193.94 million) from A\$249.6 million a year ago, the gaming machine developer said in a statement.

Revenue from the Aristocrat's digital business rose more than three-fold, and accounted for nearly 34 percent of its total revenue. Digital revenue accounted for 16 percent of the company's total in fiscal 2017.

Aristocrat's revenue from ordinary activities for the six months rose about 29 percent on the prior year.

The company had snatched up two mobile game developers last year, in an effort to diversify its business through a larger online presence. Seattle-based Big Fish Games, the more recent of the two acquisitions, had cost the company about \$990 million.

Aristocrat shares have outperformed major peers like Ainsworth Game Technology and Crown Resorts in 2018 on great expectations from its foray into the mobile gaming space.

The company declared an interim dividend of 19 cents per share, compared to 14 cents per share a year ago. (\$1 = 1.3226 Australian dollars) (Reporting by Ambar Warrick in Bengaluru, editing by G Crosse)