

Koalas set to break the mould

IN SEPTEMBER 2014 the Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail will take tourists and residents on a journey across the Hastings, its hinterland and Camden Haven.

Fifty of the metre high curios will be placed at strategic spots to encourage people to stop and stay a while in our beautiful region.

Port Macquarie has long been known as a koala haven and the Koala Hospital and study centre is the only one of its kind in Australia.

Spearheaded by Arts and Health Australia and auspiced by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, the project has the potential to draw people of all ages and diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to the region.

Eighty artists from all over Australia have submitted amazing designs from which 50 will be selected paired with sponsors to decide exactly what will feature of the koalas.

The Carbon Reduction Institute has joined with The Observatory as a sponsor as it is one of only two carbon neutral hotels in Australia.

General manager Matt Dyson said it is a



Hello koala: Sponsors Rydges Port Macquarie and Sails Resort Port Macquarie representatives general manager David Capper and sales and marketing manager Kate Wood-Foye cosy up to one of the first koalas off the mould.

good synergy and an opportunity to extend our company's reach in the market here and be part of a cultural and environmental project.

The Observatory's Trish Denny said the Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail will be brilliant for the town.

Rydges Port Macquarie's Kate Wood-Foye said she and general manager David Capper are still deciding exactly where they will place their koala.

"The koala is an iconic animal for the region. The trail is a vital tourism initiative and it's important to

support and promote it," Mrs Wood-Foye said.

"The trail will [literally] put us on the map, raise our profile and attract visitors to areas that are not typically on their radar," she said.

Other sponsors include Macquarie Waters and The Corner, Port Macquarie Panthers, Billabong Koala and Wildlife Park Cassegrain Winery, Bago Vineyards, Charles Sturt University, Ricardoes Tomatoes and Strawberries, World Par-TEA

Forestry Corporation of NSW, Emerald

Downs Estate and Golf Course, Discover Media, Primary Health Care and Sea Acres Rainforest Centre.

Partners in the project are media outlets Port News, Focus magazine, ABC Radio Mid North Coast, plus Greater Port Macquarie Tourism Association, Arts Mid North Coast, and Port Macquarie Chamber of Commerce.

For sponsorship information contact project manager Linda Hall on linda@hellokoalas.com or phone 0428 975 650 or visit www.hellokoalas.com