



Currumbin opens new \$1.5 million Wildlife Hospital

11 September 2009

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary on the Gold Coast has officially opened a new \$1.5 million Community Wildlife Hospital to ensure continued first-class treatment for the region's sick, injured and orphaned native wildlife.

The new Community Wildlife Hospital has been Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary's largest capital project over the last year and will provide a base for the Sanctuary's veterinary staff as well as providing space for researchers in a number of cooperative conservation research projects.

Prior to the opening of the new hospital, Currumbin's veterinary staff were working out of a small, outdated building and providing free treatment for more than 4500 native animals each year brought to the Hospital by concerned members of our community.

Stage 1 of the hospital construction has been completely funded through proceeds from Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary's commercial activities as well as public donations and partnership support from Gold Coast Airport Ltd and the Tugun Community Bank[®] Branch Bendigo Bank.

Stage 2, which will include an interpretive Community Native Garden Trail and Native Bird Rehabilitation Facility, has just been successful in attracting a Federal Government contribution of \$346,933 under the Jobs Fund as part of the Government's Economic Stimulus Plan.

Officially opening the new hospital, Queensland National Trust President Dr John Jackson said that, with the challenging economic conditions, building the Hospital meant delaying other necessary work in the Sanctuary.

"It was a very important National Trust of Queensland Green Guardian project that we did not want to delay any longer," Dr Jackson said.

"Our staff and volunteers, have worked in a very unsatisfactory building for many years - and they have been a real model of caring professionals.

Recently, with the Moreton Bay oil spill, the hospital was instrumental in treating pelicans which were eventually returned back to the wild.

Also, after a spate of magpie poisonings on the Southern Gold Coast, the wildlife hospital raised the alarm within the community while also treating a number of affected birds brought to the hospital.

Besides the work to provide veterinary care for the Currumbin collection as well as animals from the wild, the hospital also provides a base for researchers involved in a number of important conservation projects.

Currently, research being carried out on-site with the University of Queensland includes the artificial insemination of koalas using frozen sperm and research into echidna breeding.

Dr Jackson said Currumbin Wildlife special buildings, and the huge cultural and environmental heritage together created a core heritage place with which the National Trust of Qld has been very proud to be intimately associated, for over 33 years.

“With operating costs of around \$500,000 each year we will continue to fund the hospital from our visitors, but we anticipate that the number of animals treated will continue to rise rapidly.

“This will be through the two-fold effects of because of increased community knowledge about the Hospital and also as a direct result continued urbanisation and human activity, plus introduced wild animal attacks on our native wildlife,” Dr Jackson said.

Dr Jackson said that to supplement this, a fundraising team of Green Guardian ambassadors is also being developed with the launch of a specific Green Guardian Foundation for the Hospital.

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