

Developers favour green space over green-backs

by Shannon Willoughby
business reporter

IN the 20 years Matt Keys has been tree hugging, developers' attitudes towards green space has turned 180 degrees.

The Gold Coast businessman said property developers were increasingly using consultants in order to help preserve native bushland and build sustainable communities.

The managing director of Habitat Environment Management said legislative pressures to preserve green space had impacted his industry.

But he also said many developers were genuinely focused on maintaining and improving vegetation.

● It's amazing to see koalas up there visiting the site as well ●

"While many of these developers now have to follow legislative compliances, most actually want to maintain and preserve wildlife and fauna in their developments," Mr Keys said.

"I have been a vocal critic of the development industry in the past, but I think now times have changed."

The company has worked on the Gold Coast with Stockland, Heritage Pacific, Resort Corp, Bruce Small Developments and Sunland.

Most recently, it worked with Stockland on its \$244 million residential development, The Observatory, to protect the flora and fauna.

"The Observatory is actually a great example of how a developer has worked in well to help enhance the natural aspect of the development," he said.

"Quite often these developers get no reward for what they do in trying to help the environment and I wanted to let people know."

Mr Keys said the company carried



out initial scientific surveys, prepared relevant impact assessments and then prepared rehabilitation plans.

The Observatory has 15km of walking trails and almost 180ha – or 60 per cent of the site – of open space.

Mr Keys said they were successful in relocating all black glossy cockatoos and their food trees.

"It's amazing to see koalas up there visiting the site as well," he said.

Mr Keys, who has had roles in the Surf rider Foundation Australia, said Habitat serviced both the public and private sector.

"What most people don't realise is that a government agency has to jump through hoops as well," he said.

The Observatory developer Col Dutton and Habitat Environment Management's Matt Keys