

### Croker Oars Dips into the World Market

Mid North Coast oar manufacturer Croker Oars is located on peaceful Oxley Island near Taree. A manufacturer of carbon fibre composite oars used primarily in boat racing, the company received significant worldwide exposure at the Sydney Olympics. It is one of many companies capitalising on their success as Olympic contractors and using their international profile to increase sales and exports.

Croker Oars received immediate international exposure when Olympic rowing teams from overseas and Australia used its carbon fibre composite oars. Between them these teams won five gold, two silver and one bronze medal at the Sydney Olympic Games.

Since then, the company reports that export demand has increased significantly and inquiries have been received on a daily basis from countries such as the United States, where its products had not previously been marketed.

Croker Oars now exports to Japan, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, the US, Canada, South Africa, Hong Kong, New Zealand China and Thailand. The export market accounts for 70% of sales; mostly in racing oars.

The company has constructed an additional factory and are rebuilding the existing factory in order to meet escalating demand for the company's products.

Croker Oars will install state of the art equipment to produce their next generation of products..

The company expects to increase its full time staff from 10 to 20 positions over the next three years, while the number of sub-contractors is also expected to increase from eight to fourteen.

The NSW Department of State and Regional Development provided support for Croker Oars' expansion project at Oxley Island, near Taree, through its Regional Business Development Scheme.

The expansion project has had enormous value for the economic development of the community of Oxley Island, which has little or no other manufacturing activity.

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