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LIVING THE DREAM



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Quality stock remains limited. Migration continues. Buyer demand is active. Now, the market turns its attention to one of Queensland's most significant property auction events.

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Amir Mian

Amir Mian – Managing Director
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Paradise, Wrapped in Plastic

A national backflip on packaging reform leaves our coastline – and the economy built on it – to absorb the cost.

The Gold Coast doesn't advertise itself with skyscrapers or theme parks first — it sells a coastline. Clear water, clean beaches, a horizon uncluttered enough to make a Melbourne winter feel like a bad dream. That image is the entire premise of the region's economy, from the surf schools of Kirra to the boutique stays of Byron and the Tweed. It's also, as of this month, an image the federal government has decided is someone else's problem to protect.

The Australian Marine Conservation Society's revelation that the Albanese Government has shelved its long-promised national packaging laws isn't just a policy story out of Canberra. For a region whose entire brand rests on the ocean staying visibly, photographably clean, it's a direct hit to the product we sell.

Australia's environment ministers agreed to regulate packaging back in 2022. They confirmed voluntary measures had failed in 2023. As recently as last year, the government was citing this very reform as proof it was serious about plastic pollution. Now, citing cost-of-living pressures, it has walked away — leaving in place the voluntary system it has already admitted doesn't work.

For the Gold Coast and Tweed, the maths is uncomfortable. This is a coastline that lives on repeat visitation, on international arrivals choosing us over rival destinations precisely because the water looks the way it does in the brochure. Every piece of packaging that washes up on Burleigh, every strand of plastic photographed tangled around a turtle at Currumbin, every story that runs internationally about Australian beaches and marine debris chips away at that brand — one that took decades and considerable public and private investment to build.

There's also a slower, quieter cost closer to home. AMCS notes households already pay around $155 a year extra to buy fruit and vegetables free of single-use packaging — a tax, in effect, on doing the right thing, borne by the same local families and small operators who make up the backbone of our tourism and hospitality workforce. The laws that would have shifted that cost and responsibility back onto the businesses producing the packaging have been shelved indefinitely, with 95% public support for the reform's goals apparently not enough to see it through.

None of this means the tap turns off overnight. But it does mean the region's tourism industry, its environmental custodians and its ratepayers are now carrying a risk that federal reform was supposed to help manage — with no clear sense of when, or whether, that will change.

This masthead has spent sixteen years telling the story of this coastline at its best. It's worth being equally direct when a decision in Canberra makes that story harder to keep telling.



Brian Usher
Editor in Chief,
Ocean Road Magazine

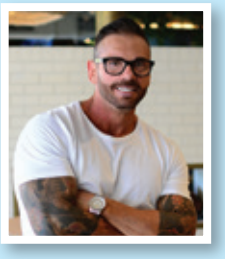


Melissa Usher
Fashion & Beauty Editor, Social Media
Ocean Road Magazine





CHRIS NYST
Shares his wisdom on life matters that may affect us.



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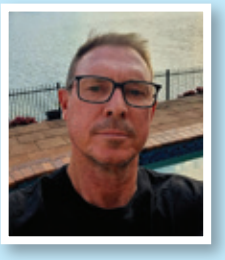

JASON OXENBRIDGE
A features writer passionate about crafting stories that inspire, resonate and entertain.



HEDLEY THOMAS
Gold Walkley award-winning journalist and National Chief Correspondent, The Australian.

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Model: Jessica Holliday
Photographer: Kate Rosenberger

General Enquiries:
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Publisher
Humion Group Australia Pty Ltd
www.oceanroadmagazine.com.au

Distribution Enquiries
brian@oceanroadmagazine.com.au

Managing Director,
Editor-in-Chief & Sales Director
Brian Usher 0412 910 857
brian@oceanroadmagazine.com.au

Consulting Editors
Laillani Ainsley

Fashion & Beauty Editor
& Social Media
Melissa Usher
melissa@oceanroadmagazine.com.au

Photography
www.usherusher.com

Fashion Layout Hair Stylists
Bernadette Cliff,
TONI&GUY Broadbeach 07 5539 9444

IT Manager
Ben Kirwood

Ocean Road Subscriptions
www.oceanroadmagazine.com.au

Accounts
Nicole Martin

Art Director & Production
Filipa Scott

Designer
Darryl Lee

Wine Writer
Peter Panousis

Contributors
Lee Adendorff
Corrine Barraclough
Sam Beau Patrick
Rick Brennan
Melinda Burton
Matthew Fleming
Krista Hall
Estelle Hunt
Steve Hunt
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Sport and major events are big business for the Gold Coast and our 83,700 registered businesses. Last financial year alone, sport delivered a $600 million boost to our local economy. Apart from welcoming competing athletes, major sporting events and festivals attract significant visitor numbers, contributing to a further $2.9 billion injection into the city economy in the 2025-26 financial year.

These figures are encouraging for our local small business community which enjoys downstream economic benefits through retail expenditure, provision of goods and services, security, logistics, marketing, sports science, accommodation and vehicle hire. In fact, the recent Gold Coast Marathon injected $65 million into our city and delivered millions of dollars of free promotion thanks to thousands of social media snaps across the marathon weekend. Big sport aside, the City is fully committed to supporting local grassroots sports as we know this is the breeding ground for future Olympians and Paralympians.

The 2026-27 City Budget includes significant funding for sport and recreational facility upgrades. This includes:

- A $10 million program to deliver female changeroom facilities at community sporting clubs;
- $94 million towards sport, recreation and aquatic centres. This includes maintenance as well as expanding existing facilities. A total of $18.3 million will be invested through the Pizzey Park Masterplan (Junior Rugby League field expansion and Southern Sporting Precinct – athletics and football clubs). The masterplan is a 15-year vision for this 60-hectare site;
- At Runaway Bay, a $145 million multi-decade precinct masterplan continues to take shape. This investment, in partnership with the State Government, will see additional capacity for netball and soccer clubs while adding BMX, a pump track and new lighting across the 65-hectare site;
- In Robina, the popular Robina Common will enjoy further upgrades as part of a $4.5 million investment; and
- A further $7.5 million investment is being made as part of the Greenheart Master Plan. Spanning 257 hectares across Merrimac and Robina, Greenheart will be six times the size of Broadwater Parklands and provide high-quality parks, sports fields and community spaces for future generations.

In the north of our city, $11 million is being invested at Coomera Sports Hub to install a second full size AFL field with LED lighting as well as new public amenities. At neighbouring Pimpama, $30 million is committed to the Pimpama PCYC and Youth Facility, a joint initiative between council and the State Government. This development will add outdoor courts, gymnastics and multi-use fitness infrastructure.

In every way, we are protecting the city's unique outdoor lifestyle while providing families with world-class facilities and attractions.

Tom Tate – Gold Coast Mayor





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"Only the best ..."

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Test shoot with photographer Kate Rosenberger in the Gold Coast Hinterland.

LIVING *the* DREAM

FROM A SUNSHINE COAST BOUTIQUE TO THE RUNWAYS OF ATHENS AND BARCELONA, JESS HOLLIDAY HAS BUILT AN INTERNATIONAL MODELLING CAREER WHILE CHASING AN EVEN BIGGER AMBITION OF HER OWN.

Words: Greg Pride
Photography: Supplied

It sounds like a cliche, but Jess Holliday really is living her best life.

When not dividing her time between homes in Bali and the Sunshine Coast, where she grew up, Jess, 27, is jet-setting the globe as an in-demand international model.

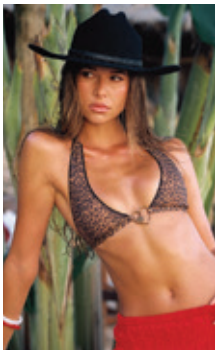
Her Instagram feed tells the tale of her enviable lifestyle – Monaco, Barcelona, the Greek Islands, Mallorca, LA and Indonesia's Komodo Islands. For this willowy, brown-eyed beauty, it's a very much a case of have looks, will travel.

Her family was originally from Victoria but Jess was born and raised on the Sunshine Coast, the youngest of three sisters.

"Growing up in a house of girls, we were always interested in that creative side of things," she says.

"We were always doing lots of art, painting and drawing and that kind of thing with Mum."





Above and Right: **Shoot for brand Haute Swimwear with photographer Dana Moon on the Gold Coast. Test shoot with photographer Pietro Favaron in Uluwatu, Bali. Studio fashion shoot.**



After graduating from Mountain Creek State High, Jess was unsure what she wanted to do with her life.

"I always saw myself going to university but after I finished school, I took a gap year and travelled through Europe for a few months, " she recalls.

"I went to Sri Lanka first and met my sister there, and then I went around Greece, Italy – that coastal side of Europe – and then Morocco. It was so beautiful, but three months was long enough and I was ready to come home."

On her return, she began studying environmental science at uni.

"That was the path that I thought I wanted to go down, because I was always into animals, nature and the environment when I was growing up," she says.

"I did a semester but it wasn't really what I was expecting it was going to be, so I ended up stopping that and just going through a phase of trying to work out what I wanted to do."

Jess had a stint working in hospitality before landing a job at popular coastal fashion boutique Alterior Motif at Cotton Tree in Maroochydoore.

"I feel like that was a pivotal time for me," she recalls.

"I was around a lot of really nice brands, and I was working with some really lovely girls. And then at that point, I decided I was going to go to TAFE and study fashion design.

"I'd always loved fashion and clothes growing up, but I went through a phase where I was quite stuck on what I wanted to do. I was talking to my older sister and she was like, 'you should do fashion design'. She always knew I loved putting together outfits and that kind of thing. So I went and studied that for two years and I finished the course."

It was while working at Alterior Motif in 2023 that Jess was scouted by a Gold Coast modelling agency, through her Instagram profile.

"It was a bit of a risk – we both packed up and

"My boss at the time (at the boutique) was really good," she says.

"Whenever I'd have little (modelling) jobs pop up, she would always make sure I'd be able to leave work to get to them. At that point, modelling wasn't that serious for me, it was more or less a side hustle.

"It wasn't something that I thought I would really pursue full-time, I guess, because I just wasn't sure how far I would go with it at that time."

Jess had met her partner, Noosa surfboard shaper Jimmy Crowe, around the same time and the couple



Test shoot with photographer Jacob Frazer in Athens, near the Acropolis.

headed to Bali, not knowing if we'd have any work." — Jess Holliday

decided to relocate to Bali.

"We both always thought if there was somewhere overseas that we would try to live, it would be Bali," she says.

"It was a bit of a risk I guess – we both kind of packed up and headed over there, not knowing if we would have any work. We didn't really know what we were getting ourselves into or how long we would stay there for.

"Luckily, I found an agency over there and Jimmy found a job, and that's when I guess I started to get really busy. We told everyone before we left that we'd probably only last six months, but it ended up working out, and we've been there ever since."

The couple live near Canggu, with Jimmy shaping boards under his own eponymous label and Jess using the Indonesian holiday island as an idyllic base for her modelling work.





Above and Below: A photo taken at Sarakiniko, Milos (Greece). A photo taken of a street in Barcelona.

"Bali is a great location because it's not far from Australia but it's also a little bit closer to Europe, and there are direct flights home to the Sunshine Coast," she says.

Jess's first big overseas assignment was to the Greek island of Milos, an experience she says was "amazing".

"I went over there with a photographer and a creative team, and we took over a few different brands," she says.

"You're kind of shooting with all the same people every day, which is nice. You get to know each other a lot better. And my partner came over for that one too, which was really great. We did a bit of travelling, so it was kind of half work, half holiday.

"Milos was somewhere I'd never

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been to before and it was really beautiful. We did a few little boat trips and things like that."

Jess returned to Bali before another work trip to Greece beckoned, this time to Athens.

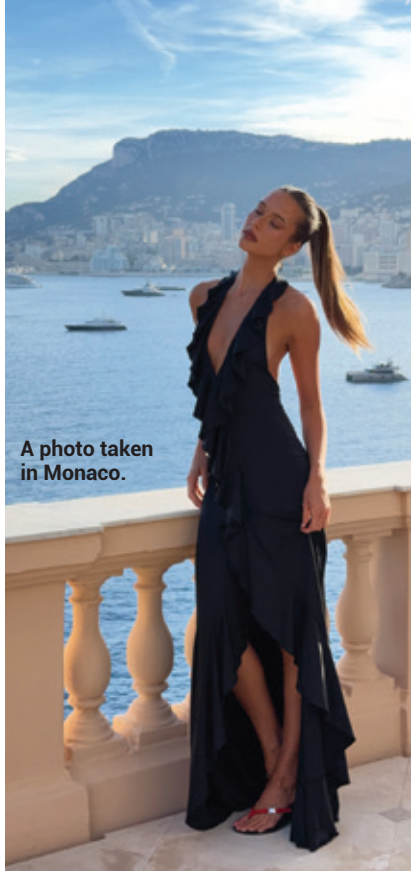
"There was an agency there that was interested in signing me, so I went over. It was all very last minute," she says.

"Two of my best friends were visiting me in Bali at the time, and I got a call while they were there from my agency asking if I could fly over to Greece within a week.

"It definitely teaches you how to adapt and get used to just the unpredictability of things (in the modelling industry) sometimes."

Jess worked in Athens for six weeks, "staying in model accommodation with about six other girls".

"It was just little dorms, so it was definitely interesting, almost like a school camp or backpacker hostel," she says with a laugh.



A photo taken in Monaco.

"They're just tiny little apartments, so you've often got two or three girls in just one bedroom. So many cultures, so many different personalities, but it was a super-interesting and really cool experience."

After Athens, where she modelled at Athens Fashion Week, a Spanish agency reached out and Jess travelled on to Barcelona for another month of modelling.

"I loved Barcelona – it's one of my favourite places in the world, especially for work," she says.

"There are so many different brands there and the vibe was totally different to Athens, so it was really nice to get the contrast between the two.

"One of my favourite things about modelling is travel. You get to meet so



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"It definitely teaches you how to adapt and get used to the unpredictability

Test shoot with photographer Kate Rosenberger in the Gold Coast Hinterland.

many different people, and wherever you go, everyone has such a different way of expressing creativity.

"You go to photo shoots, and every photographer is so different in the way that they do things, you just learn so much. And it just opens your eyes a lot to the different visions that people have, which is really nice."

Jess also enjoys the contrasts of her work, from modelling swimwear in Bali to high fashion in Europe.

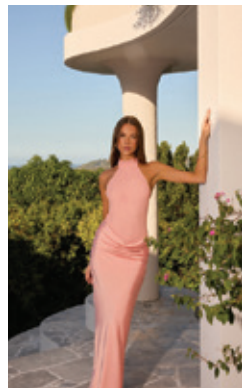
"I'd travelled to Europe previously but it's a very different experience when you're there just working. You don't get as much downtime to yourself; you're just running from spot to spot," she says.

"I feel like in Australia and in Bali, you have a lot more time for yourself when you're not working. Whereas over there, if you're not working, you're going to castings every day. When I was in Athens, some days I was going to seven to 10 castings.

"Athens is a big city and you have to get yourself from place to place by yourself, so it definitely teaches you to fend for yourself and helps build your confidence.

"...things in the modelling industry." — Jess Holliday







Above and Left: Shoot for brand Peppermayo in the Gold Coast. Shoot by photographer Sydney Symons for brand Wild & Pacific, in Bali. Test shoot with photographer Camila Mello, in Bali.

After a hectic period of travel, Jess has spent more time in Bali and Australia this year, working closer to home – spliced with a trip to Monaco in June.

"I've just been going between Australia and Bali every few months," she says.

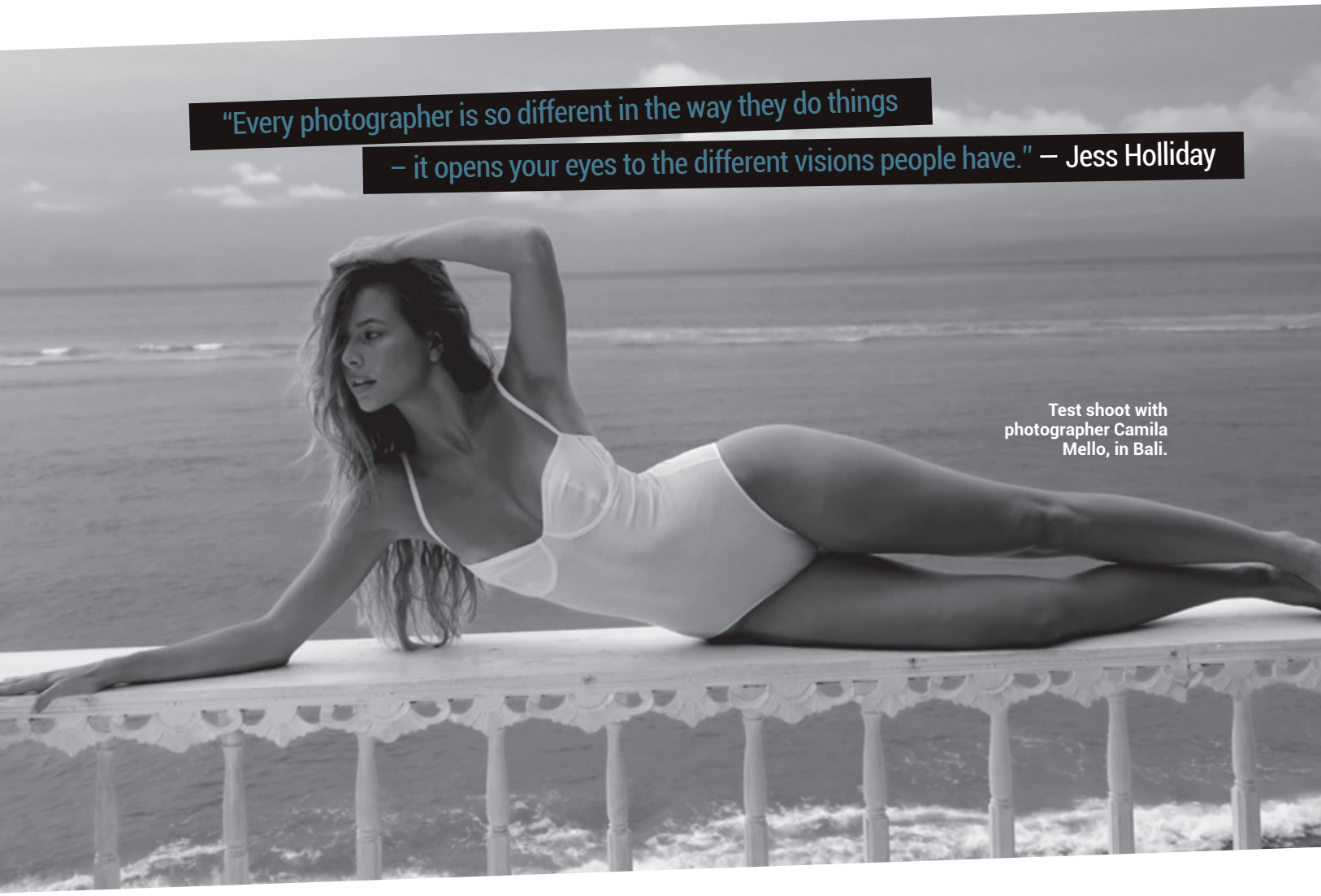
"I've been in Australia a lot more this year than I would've planned. I was planning on spending most of my time over in Bali and doing a few little visits here, but it's definitely flipped itself around. But it's good. It's nice coming home, and there's been plenty of work here."

Jess has worked with brands including Nude Project (Spain), Michael Hill, Triangl Swim, MWL Bridal, Peppermayo, Vacay Swimwear, Atolea Jewellery and Cleonie, while she has aspirations to shoot for the likes of Bec & Bridge, Rat & Boa, Sommer Swim, Frankies Bikinis and Realisation Par.

Asked to nominate her fashion icons, Jess says she looks up to the likes of 1990s supermodels Claudia Schiffer and Giselle Bündchen.

"I'm always looking at different inspirations but if I was thinking about model inspiration, I feel like I tend to be drawn towards that '90s supermodel era," she says.

"Looking back at the runway fashion there, it's just so timeless and



Test shoot with photographer Camila Mello, in Bali.

effortless, that whole era. Outside of that, I'm inspired by a lot of other kinds of people too, especially women who've built careers beyond their modelling such as (former Victoria's Angel model and actress) Rosie Huntington-Whiteley.

"I think that's really important. I really admire especially women who have their own creative direction and aren't afraid to evolve, or who've gone and created something else for themself after modelling as well."

On that note, Jess has her own ambitions beyond modelling.

"I really want to have my own fashion brand," she says.

"When I moved over to Bali, because at that point my modelling career hadn't really taken off yet, I was going over with the intention of starting a brand and then I got too busy with modelling.

"It's something I'm still working on, but I just want to do something that reflects my own style and that I can put my own creative input into.

"I feel like from all of my modelling and travelling, I've taken in a lot and been exposed to a lot of different influences. So I'd like to one day be able to bring that together and put it into something that's my own."

For now though, Jess continues to live the dream as a globetrotting model.

"I love it, I'm so grateful for it," she says.

"I feel like it's brought me so many opportunities and the ability to go places that I never would've thought about going if it wasn't for modelling.

"Obviously I won't be able to model forever but it's definitely something I want to do for as long as I can. You have hard days but even they're rewarding. And on the good days, it kind of makes you wonder how lucky you are to have this as your job."



REFLECTIONS *a rare waterfront address* on the Broadwater

A rare foreshore landholding gives rise to 90 boutique residences, marking a new benchmark for lifestyle living on the northern Gold Coast.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team**
Photography: **Supplied by Niecon**

The legacy of the third generation Niecon, one of the Gold Coast's most established property names, is officially underway with the official launch of its much heralded Reflections on the Broadwater, a $168m boutique residential address set directly on the Broadwater foreshore at Biggera Waters.

The release of 90 luxury residences across 14 levels brings a rare parcel of true waterfront land to market and sets a fresh standard for considered lifestyle-driven apartment living on the northern Gold Coast.

Sitting on sought-after Marine Parade, one of the last significant landholdings along this stretch of the Broadwater, Reflections has been positioned to capture uninterrupted water views, direct foreshore access and the kind of address that rarely becomes available in an increasingly built-out waterfront market.

"Land like this rarely comes up anymore," said William Nikiforides, Managing Director of Niecon.

"You're looking at one of the last true waterfront sites on this part of the Broadwater - there's no replacing a position like it. When we secured the site, we knew we had a responsibility to do it justice."

Mr. Nikiforides said the northern Gold Coast had matured into a popular region, and Reflections on the Broadwater had been designed to reflect that shift.

"The Gold Coast has evolved enormously over the past decade, and today's buyers are looking for more than just a view," Nikiforides said.

"You've got easy connectivity to Brisbane and the rest of the coast, but what sets a Broadwater foreshore address apart is what it does for how you actually live day to day – walking and cycling the foreshore, getting out on the water, starting and ending the day by the water."

That emphasis on wellbeing echoes a trend now well-documented across premium coastal markets nationally, where buyers are placing growing weight on walkability, access to open water and green space, and proximity to everyday recreation when weighing up a purchase. Reflections on the Broadwater includes a state-of-the-art wellness circuit exclusively for residents, featuring a resort-style heated pool, fully equipped gymnasium, hot and cold plunge pools, outdoor showers, a yoga lawn, sauna, and thoughtfully designed spaces for relaxation, recovery and wellbeing.

Mr. Nikiforides said this shift was playing out clearly in early enquiry for Reflections on the Broadwater. "We hear it constantly from purchasers now – people want less time commuting and more time outdoors, by the water, with their family," William said.

"A foreshore address like this lets residents have both: the connectivity to get to Brisbane or the airport when they need to, and a slower pace of life the moment they're home."

The project is shaped in collaboration between Niecon, interior design studio Tom Mark Henry and award-winning Brisbane architecture practice Kris Kowalski Architects. Together, the team has focused on a facade and floorplan language that responds directly to the waterfront setting – maximising the outlook and natural light across every residence.

The collection is made up of 68 two-bedroom homes and 22 larger three-bedroom + MPR residences.

As Niecon operates as both developer and builder, the company maintains direct oversight of the project from initial design through to final settlement, giving purchasers accountability and tighter quality control throughout planning, construction and handover.

Niecon Group is an established developer in the region, drawing on more than 50 years in the industry and a portfolio of 23 completed projects with a combined value exceeding $2.14 billion, alongside 38 industry awards to date.

Apartment prices at Reflections on the Broadwater start from $1.16 million for a two-bedroom residence, with three-bedroom + MPR homes priced from $2,195,000.

Construction is scheduled to begin in November 2026, with completion anticipated in December 2028.

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Junior's Deli: "Philly Cheese Steak Sandwich"

What are the locals *EATING?*

HINTERLAND CAFÉS WHERE THE FOOD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.

Words: **Mudgeeraba Food and Art Trail**
Photography: **Jude Kalman**

Having grown up in a Scottish village where cafe food rarely ventured beyond bacon rolls and scones, you'd be forgiven for assuming a 1980s limp ham and cheese toastie is all you can expect from a hinterland cafe.

Fast forward to 2026 and those once sleepy green corners west of the highway are home to hidden foodie gems rivalling their coastal cousins.

No more squeezing your way past lycra clad Gen Zs pairing their coffee with a live DJ set. We do things a little differently in the hinterland.

Expect local chefs serving food that reflects themselves, made with the highest quality produce available. Be greeted like an old friend, invited to linger a while and to savour the experience like a local.

We asked three popular spots, "What are the locals eating?".

Now in its 11th year, Mudjira Village Eatery, the traditional Yugambeh language name for Mudgeeraba, sits at the heart of the village. Living up to its name, "a place of many stories", tables spill out of the cafe, flooding the courtyard with community.

Leigh Mercer and his team have developed a sophisticated and flavourful menu, deliverable under the demands of a fast paced cafe.

"Every component on the dish has a purpose. Nothing is there to fill a spot or simply look pretty," Leigh explains.

Their Chilli Eggs on Toast came about from the creation of their famous Crunchy Chilli Oil.

Toasted sourdough is layered with freshly sliced avocado and poached eggs, topped with pickled red onions and snow pea tendrils with a lemon dill dressing, then finished with everyone's favourite Crunchy Chilli Oil.

"What seems like a simple dish is actually quite complex. The poached eggs must be perfectly cooked. The dill dressing, egg yolks, chilli oil and the fat of the avocado, when combined together, create this amalgamation of flavours that is so hard to explain," Leigh beams.

On the other side of the village green, you'll find Junior's Deli Sandwich and Burger Bar, named in homage to chef

John Draper's father and namesake.

51 Railway Street has been feeding the local community for over 30 years. Its rich history and village location felt like the perfect fit for his first eatery.

Spend five minutes talking with John and you quickly realise food lives in his very bones. He's a firm believer that "the food should speak for itself".

With a focus on the classics, John serves up "relatable food that people can approach and don't feel excluded from, but done at the highest level it can possibly be, with every element crafted individually. I want to produce things people have heard of, but when they taste it they say, 'That's the best version I've ever had' and 'How is he doing that?'"

That's exactly what his Philly Cheese Steak Sandwich is doing.

At its core, the Philly is meat and cheese inside a hoagie roll. But here's what makes it the "best you've ever tasted".

A traditional style American hoagie from Burleigh Baker is toasted on the grill and spread with homemade ranch.

Add premium Scotch Fillet sourced from Bindaree, where John spent many weekend family adventures.

> *"Be greeted like an old friend, invited to linger a while and to savour the experience like a local."*

Pair the creamy, clean taste of Italian Provolone Dolce with the nuttiness of an American High Melt.

Top with diced brown onions and roasted bell peppers and your perfect sandwich is complete.

Nestled away from the village centre is The Hearth Café & Providore. This farmhouse inspired cafe, born of a dream and divine timing, has become a favourite with locals since opening Easter 2025.

"I've noticed hospitality shifting towards a more grab and go convenience style of food. I wanted to create a third space where you can come and connect with the people you love," shares Mikka Richter, owner.

Her focus on serving "food that tastes like you care" shapes how produce is sourced. Pasture raised eggs, nitrate free meats, organic flour breads and homemade sauces, syrups and pickles.

The cafe's essence of "European Soul, Australian Soil" is reflected in their signature Hearth Plate, a play on a Scandinavian breakfast of bread, ham and cheese, elevated by Mikka's passion for quality organic ingredients.

It starts with a beautiful Cacciatore from Byron Bay's Salumi Australia, paired with Comté, a firm cheese with a rich, nutty flavour. Add organic sourdough and pasture raised jammie eggs direct from the farmer, accompanied by a delicious fennel and herb salad, wholegrain mustard and honey.

If you still need a push to jump in the car and head 15 minutes west of the ocean, I think John said it best: "When you visit a hinterland café, it's often like walking into someone's living room or kitchen... Someone who is creating something which is a reflection of themselves."

The Mudgeeraba Food and Art trail invites you to discover more about our beautiful hinterland and invite you to visit www.mudgeerabafoodandarttrail.com.au



Mudjira Village Eatery "Chilli Eggs on Toast"



The Hearth Cafe and Providore "Hearth Plate"



RISING to the occasion

Built on family, fuelled by craftsmanship and proudly serving the local community, Mr Bake is proving that traditional baking, genuine hospitality and community spirit are still the perfect recipe for success.

Words & Photography: **Brian Usher**

In a food landscape increasingly dominated by franchises, mass production and convenience, Mr Bake is doing something refreshingly old-fashioned: baking properly.

Founded in Robina in 2023 by born-and-bred Gold Coasters Mitch and Sarah Rough, Mr Bake is an independent family bakery built on trade skill, community connection and a genuine love of good food. For Mitch, a baker with more than 20 years' experience across almost every corner of the industry, opening Mr Bake was a return to what first drew him into baking – the craft, the people, and the satisfaction of making something by hand.

After spending more than a decade travelling in sales and management roles within the bakery industry, Mitch was ready for a change. He and Sarah wanted to reconnect with their local community, work closer to home, and create more time with their two young boys, Miles and Finn. Mr Bake became more than a business idea. It became a way to build something local, meaningful and lasting.

Today, Mr Bake is very much a family operation. Mitch leads the baking, production and day-to-day operations, bringing decades of technical knowledge to the ovens each morning. Sarah manages the business, administration, marketing and front-of-house, helping shape the customer experience and keep the wheels turning behind the scenes. Mitch's brother Tim is also part of the team as a bakery all-rounder, while Miles and Finn are beginning to get involved too – often spotted helping before school or during the holidays.

Mitch's journey began with a bakery apprenticeship in Tweed Heads, where he discovered a passion for artisan bread and traditional bakery products.

From there, his career took him through independent bakeries, a head baker role in Perth, large-scale bakery manufacturing, and technical baking and product development for national franchise brand Brumby's.

He later became a bakery and pastry trainer and assessor for a registered training organisation, a role that allowed him to pass on his knowledge to the next generation of bakers.

His career then expanded into sales and management, working with some of Australia's largest bakery ingredient suppliers, a major flour supplier and a national sourdough manufacturer.

It is a broad and hard-earned background, but Mitch's love of the industry has never faded.

At Mr Bake, that experience is visible in the product. This is not a bakery built on shortcuts. Products are made in-store from scratch, using time-honoured recipes with the family's own touch. Pastry is made with care, fillings are full of flavour, and the bread program is anchored by Mr Bake's own signature sourdough, produced from a mother dough and long fermentation process that gives it a bold, distinctive flavour.

The bakery's range includes sourdough loaves, baguettes, sandwiches made on in-house baked bread, sausage rolls, pastries, cakes, custom cakes, catering, barista-made coffee and a cabinet full of customer favourites. Locals return for the vanilla slice, cannoli, cronuts, key lime tarts, bacon and egg rolls, sausage rolls, sourdough and, of course, the pies.

> "This is not a bakery built on shortcuts. Everything is made in-store from scratch, using traditional methods and decades of baking experience."

The pies have now earned recognition beyond the Robina shopfront. At the 2026 Australia's Best Pie & Pastie Competition, held at the Bakery Industry Trade Show, Mr Bake received five medals: silver for Lamb Coconut Curry, silver for Chunky Beef and Mushroom,



Mitch and Sarah celebrate another win for Mr Bake: 1st place for Vanilla Slice at the Queensland Baking Show.

silver for Beef, Jalapeño, Chorizo and Cheese, bronze for Chunky Beef, and bronze for an Apprentice Made Plain Pie.

The apprentice result is particularly important to Mitch and Sarah. Training and development are part of the bakery's identity, not an afterthought. In 2025, Mr Bake apprentice Sunny was awarded second place in School Based Apprentice of the Year, recognising the next generation of talent coming through the business.

Mr Bake employs 10 staff members, including an apprentice, a cake decorator, casual and part-time front-of-house staff, three local high school students and two university students. For a small independent business, that matters.

It means local jobs, practical training, first work opportunities and a pathway into the baking and hospitality industries.

The bakery is also active beyond the counter. Since its first year, Mr Bake has supported Robina Roos AFL Club and Bonogin Valley Bulls Cricket Club through cash sponsorship, product support, bread supply, function catering, game-day spreads and raffle prizes. For Mitch and Sarah, community involvement is not a marketing line. It is part of what they set out to build.

"We're Gold Coast locals, and we wanted Mr Bake to feel like a true local bakery," Sarah says. "A place where people can come in for their bread, coffee, lunch, cakes or pies and know they are supporting a family business that is genuinely part of the community."

That sense of place is central to Mr Bake's appeal. It is a bakery with skilled hands behind the food and local people behind the counter. It is artisan without being intimidating, traditional without being stuck in the past, and community-minded without losing sight of quality.

In a city that continues to grow rapidly, Mr Bake is a reminder that local businesses still shape the character of a neighbourhood. The bakery is not just selling sourdough, pies and coffee. It is keeping a trade alive, creating local jobs, backing local sport and giving Robina a bakery it can call its own.

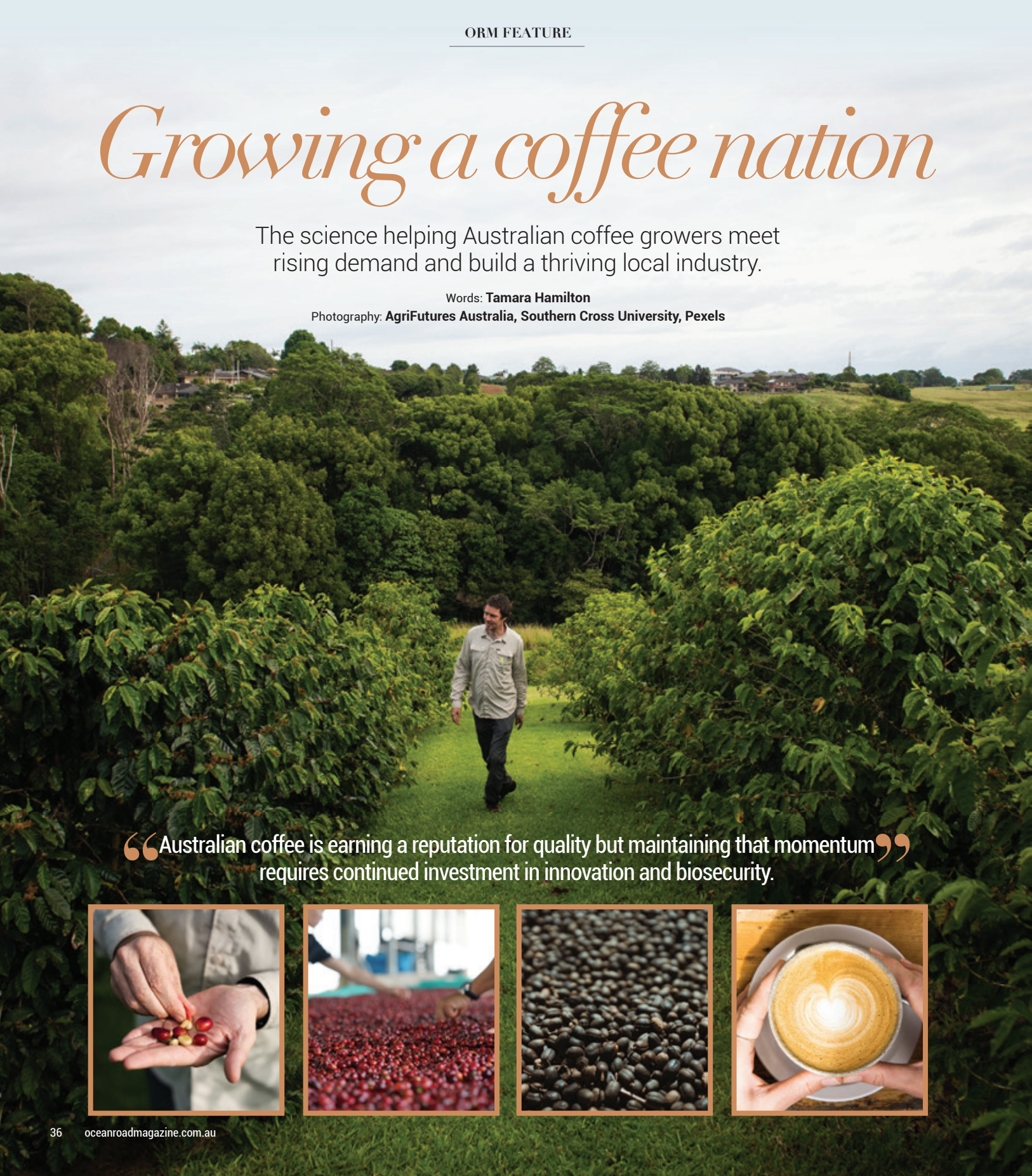
For Gold Coasters looking to support independent business, Mr Bake is worth a visit – whether it is for an award-winning pie, a loaf of sourdough, a custom cake, catering for the office or family table, a morning coffee or simply to back a family business doing things properly.

Locals can support Mr Bake in-store at 110 Laver Drive, Robina or following along on social media at @hellomrbake. For orders and enquiries, email mrbake.robina@gmail.com or phone 0419 917 489.

Growing a coffee nation

The science helping Australian coffee growers meet rising demand and build a thriving local industry.

Words: **Tamara Hamilton**
Photography: **AgriFutures Australia, Southern Cross University, Pexels**



"Australian coffee is earning a reputation for quality but maintaining that momentum requires continued investment in innovation and biosecurity."

Australians drink around two billion cups of coffee every year. Yet despite being one of the world's most passionate coffee-loving nations, less than one per cent of the coffee consumed in Australia is grown here.

That gap presents a significant opportunity for local growers.

From the tropical tablelands of Far North Queensland to the subtropical regions of northern New South Wales and south-east Queensland, Australian coffee producers are building a reputation for quality and sustainability. Now, a landmark research investment aims to help the industry grow, strengthening production, protecting against future threats and helping more Australian-grown coffee find its way into Australian cups.

Southern Cross University is leading a $4 million national research program to help Australian coffee growers expand production, improve productivity and protect the industry from future biosecurity threats.



Funded by AgriFutures Australia and in partnership with Plant Health Australia, the University of Queensland and the Australian Grown Coffee Association, the five-year Australian Coffee Research Program is the largest coordinated investment in Australian coffee research and development to date.

The program will help growers improve productivity, test new coffee varieties under commercial production settings, strengthen biosecurity preparedness, provide growers with better tools to manage future risks, and explore opportunities to expand production across Australia's coffee-growing regions.

Professor Tobias Kretzschmar, Southern Cross University Researcher and Program Lead, said the collaboration would provide the evidence needed to support sustainable intensification and expansion of the industry.

"Australia has ideal conditions for producing premium coffee, but continued growth depends on giving growers access to the best science, varietals and practical tools," Professor Kretzschmar said.

"This program builds on five years of successful variety selection trials and brings together leading expertise from across the country to solve industry challenges around sustainable intensification and biosecurity, ensuring research delivers benefits for growers."

Coffee is already grown commercially in the tropical tablelands of Far North Queensland, the cooler subtropical regions of south-east Queensland and the NSW North Coast, with the potential for expansion into other suitable regions across Australia as knowledge, genetics and production systems continue to improve.

Australia remains the only coffee growing country free of the main coffee pests and diseases, such as Coffee Berry Borer and coffee leaf rust, that are seriously threatening coffee production globally, exacerbated by climate change. The program aims at maintaining this status long term to provide coffee growers with the associated exclusion benefits and consumers with a pesticide-free coffee experience.

AgriFutures Australia General Manager, Levied and Emerging Industries, Samantha Beresford, said Australia was well placed to build a globally recognised premium coffee industry.

"Australians are among the world's most passionate coffee drinkers, yet almost every cup we drink starts overseas. That presents an enormous opportunity for Australian growers," Ms Beresford said.

"Demand for locally produced food and beverages continues to grow, while global coffee supply is becoming increasingly vulnerable to climate pressures, pests and diseases.

"This investment is about ensuring Australian growers have the research, innovation and confidence to produce more world-class coffee while protecting the industry from future biosecurity threats."

Australian Grown Coffee Association President Rebecca Zentveld said growers had identified research as a high priority.

"Consumer demand for Australian-grown coffee continues to increase," said Ms Zentveld who is also the biological farming director at Zentveld's Coffee Farm and Roastery at Newrybar near Byron Bay.

"Australian growers consistently produce premium coffee, but there's enormous potential to increase production and strengthen the industry's competitiveness.

"This investment will provide growers with research outcomes and knowledge to improve profitability while helping safeguard the future of Australian grown coffee."

Australia's coffee industry comprises around 40 commercial growers, farming approximately 400 hectares, with capacity to produce around 800 tonnes of coffee each year.

Far North Queensland grower Jack Murat said the investment recognises the industry's potential.

"Australian coffee is earning a reputation for quality but maintaining that momentum requires continued investment in innovation and biosecurity," Mr Murat said.

"The research will give growers greater confidence to invest, adopt new practices and continue producing premium Australian coffee that can compete with the best in the world."

The Australian Coffee Research Program will run for five years, delivering research and innovation that supports productivity, profitability and sustainable industry growth while strengthening Australia's preparedness against major exotic coffee pests and diseases.

For a nation that drinks billions of cups of coffee each year, the future opportunity is clear. With the right research, innovation and industry collaboration, more of Australia's daily brew could one day be grown on Australian soil.

YA'AHOWU NIAS

Perfect waves, powerful stories.

From world-class barrels at Lagundri Bay to a survivor's account of the 2005 tsunami, a journey through Indonesia's legendary surf island reveals a community shaped by waves, resilience and family.

Words: **Jason Oxenbridge** Photography: **Brian Usher** *www.usherusher.com*, **Agus Wau** *@raffielnias_surfvideo*, **Paulinus Hulu** *@paulinushulu_photography*



The reef awakens beneath crystal-clear water as almond-shaped walls wrap around the point with hypnotic precision.

Paddling back into the line-up I pause and let the moment saturate the senses. This wave has graced countless magazine covers and fuelled the dreams of generations of single-fin mounted pioneers, spice trail hippies and hardcore chargers, tracking swells to this tiny and remote island in the Indonesian archipelago.

Today it's a couple of dads with their sons and we're trading tubes with locals who know the contour of the reef – just like they know the delicate dance across the notorious slippery tiles enroute to the keyhole.

Main Photo: Brian Usher 60 years young enjoying the green room.
Far left inset: The spoils of war... Marty Allen snaps his MAD board! *Below L to R:* Hunter Usher, Jason Oxenbridge and son Jet carving up uncrowded perfection.



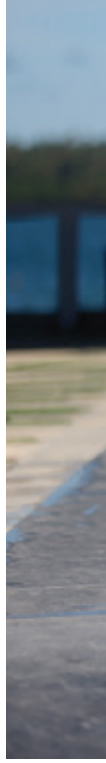












Perfect tubes are sucking surfers trance-like into their visceral vortex.

Yet despite its legendary status, we're blessed as the Lagundri Bay line-up on Nias remains remarkably uncrowded.

ORM publisher and editor-in-chief Brian 'big boss' Usher and myself are sharing the line-up with our surf-stoked grommets Hunter and Jet, who are snapping at the heels of their salty old dads.

It's an unforgettable session as we hoot each other into waves and the boys are charging. Sun blazing, light offshore winds and water so glassy it's difficult sometimes to see the sets standing up on the ledge.

As a set marches into the bay and begins to build, the hungry pack jostles for position on the reef. The locals have the place wired, taking off deeper and encouraging each other to paddle.

The first wave is double overhead and crashes wide. I get whacked by an avalanche of white water. Gripping my board, I'm spiralling deep and telling myself not to let go of that 6'3 piece of foam and fibreglass that will eventually be spat out the top of the swirling chaos to safety. As I emerge with lungs burning, another wave unloads across the reef. I glance sideways and see a surfer dropping into one of the waves of the day.

It's Jet and he freefalls late, gliding down the giant face. It's the last vision I have as the wave crashes on top of me sending me back down.

Dragging board and body into the washing machine below, a sense of calm washes over me. For a split second, pride replaces concern. Watching your child willingly push their limits and conquer fear is one of life's rare privileges.

Even as this whitewater sends me tumbling beneath the surface, I know this session will become one we'll talk about for years to come.

Brian has copped a beating and the pain in his shoulder from paddling for days and getting tumbled by the turbulence is aching. He wants to go in, but I tell him he needs to get a set wave first. Another wave approaches and spins wide. I bellow for him to paddle. "This one's yours Brian, go!"

He paddles hard, gets to his feet and swoops as the wave begins to horseshoe into the bay. Flying off the bottom he sets a rail and drives up under the lip disappearing behind the curtain. He emerges seconds later into the channel, grinning like a geeky kid with a container of donuts. He's just caught the wave of his life.

For a bloke who forgot his luggage when we picked him up and we had to do a U-turn on the way to the airport, his muscle memory is fine today. Can't remember his luggage but remembers how to get barrelled. We hoot and holler and the photographers in the boat anchored in the channel give the thumbs up.

Sometimes it takes just one moment to shift the dial. It might be a kind, random gesture from a stranger, a cold beer with mates after a calamitous game of golf, a moment of spontaneous romance with your sweetheart, laughing aloud at silly stuff with friends and family – or emerging from the perfect wave on a picture-perfect day.

As the sun sets on another scintillating day in Lagundri Bay, the session is relived over a few frosty Bintang beers. We drain the amber fluid, happy and sun kissed. Tomorrow, we'll do it all again.

SURVIVING TSUNAMIS

Indonesia's legendary Lagundri Bay is famous for one of the world's most perfect waves. But beyond the flawless barrels lies a story of resilience, family and a community that rebuilt itself after unimaginable tragedy.

Raffiel Wau knows, he was there and survived.







Photos from far left: **Raffiel Nias Pool at night; Marty carving it up on his MAD equipment; Raffiel Nias Hotel; relaxing poolside; Raffiel in front of Medical Centre across the road; owner Raffiel recounting the night his life turned upside down.**

He shuffles uncomfortably in his chair. The 52-year-old has 'goosebumps' and the tropical heat is unsettling. He requests that the camera we're using to record the conversation be turned off. It's the first time he's spoken publicly about the night that turned his life upside down, and wreaked devastation across his tiny island of Nias.

On March 28, 2005, the ocean swallowed the land in great gulps and Raffiel was swept by an avalanche of water and debris onto the roof of a neighbouring medical centre.

He was with friends in the village at a ceremony when he returned to the family losmen he had built from bamboo with his father.

"Let me tell you, tsunami is not an easy story to talk about," he says, tears welling in his eyes. "I was there, and I survived."

Raffiel went to a party in the village and returned home at around 10pm. His wife, pregnant with their fourth child Agus, and three other young children were sleeping.

"I turn on the TV to watch a movie and its Twister and the road is buckling and chaos (is) everywhere. I'm eating a curry at the table and the food starts sloshing from the bowl. Then the table starts to move, and I look back at the TV and think how can this be real, I must be in a dream."

Unbeknown to Raffiel and the people of Nias, that dream was soon to become a living nightmare when an earthquake struck the Banyak Islands. In the aftermath, 1600 people would be killed and 1300 were from the tiny, exposed island of Nias.

Fearing a tsunami similar to the previous Indian Ocean earthquake just three months prior, Raffiel quickly moved his young family out of their home and into the mountains. It was pitch black and word soon spread through the village to move to higher ground. People headed for the hills on foot. In the emerging chaos, his wife, heavily pregnant with their fourth child, fell into a stormwater drain.

"I don't know how, but I just reached down and with all my strength pulled my wife out of there. Everything was a blur and people in the village were running towards the mountains. We didn't know if another big shock was coming, but after the Thailand earthquake we feared that a tsunami would come."

At around 11pm after ushering his family into a nearby church, Raffiel bolted back home to retrieve important documents. The last-minute decision almost proved fateful.

"When I knew the family was safe, I went back to the losmen and jumped though the bedroom window to get my documents and money. The problem was the bed had moved across the room and jammed against the wardrobe, and I couldn't open it. Then I heard the reef up on the point explode."

Raffiel had no idea that a tsunami of water measuring more than four metres was on its way through the bay to smash his village and all that dared to linger in its destructive path.

"Before I knew it, I was hit with a wall of water. I couldn't see anything, it was dark and the sound was scary man. When I came up for air I was on the roof of a building which turned out to be the medical centre across the road. The roof was all asbestos and caving in, and I was clinging to the rafters. Nothing made sense.

"Then I saw the bay turn white in the darkness and I swear it was a 60ft wave closing out the bay. I went under water again and was washed off the roof and was getting hit by pieces of wood. I was under a long time, and thought, this is it, I'm going to die."

With survival skills honed by surfing big waves, Raffiel emerged from the





Photos from top left: **Investor Steve Michell; Raffiel's brother Yuni, at his ding repair across the road "Me fix big hole good!"; the boys in action.**


Brian Usher



liquid rubble and started 'swimming for the bush'.

He knew the water would soon recede and drag everything in its wake back into its big dark belly that had turned the beautiful bay into a giant stew of filth, bobbing with ripped rooves and rubble.

"I didn't know where I was or where my family was. It was like I was still in a dream. Was I alive? My head was spinning; I was scared for my family. There were so many people running and screaming and I was trying to speak to people to ask where I was and what was going on and had they seen my family.

"After walking through the bush, the sun was starting to come up and then I heard something I will never forget "Daddy, daddy". It was my youngest son Alvin, and I felt so much relief that my family was safe. Everyone thought I had died."

After reuniting with his family, Raffiel walked back into the village with his brother Yuni to survey the damage and to assess if it was safe for his wife and children to return.

"Yuni just looked at me and said "Raffiel, someone has taken my losmen." My losmen was the only building left standing and I think because I built (it) using strong foundations."

For six-year-old Alvin, who's little voice carried through the carnage to alert his dad of their whereabouts, the scene was surreal.

"I remember just seeing all these dead fish everywhere," he says, now a father himself and manager of Raffiel Nias.

"They were on the road, in the paddocks, on the reef, just all different kinds of fish. Big, small, it didn't matter."

In the aftermath of the tsunami, Raffiel moved his family away. It meant leaving the village where he had grown up, where he would cheekily skip school to surf the perfect, cylindrical tubes that wrapped into the bay in front of his home.

"We ran away from here because I was fearful that another one (tsunami) would come," he says.

"First we moved to Laketober in Sumatra but there were too many landslides, so we moved to Medan. After a few days there a tornado hit. I was thinking man, something is out to get us. Then we moved down to Bali and then Lombok. Then we moved to Sibolga in 2005 and another earthquake came."

After taking refuge with his longtime family friend 'Beng Beng', Raffiel finally made the call to take his family home to Lagundri Bay. It had been almost a year since he was swept away in the deluge. It was time to rebuild and to support the village and the people that were slowly putting back the pieces.

"The family wanted to live here, it was our home and we had to start again. Donations started coming in from Portugal and then Red Cross came and we started to rebuild.

"The (Indonesian) government came and wanted to hear our story, but I would not tell it to them. It was too raw to talk about and I was angry. I said, 'why didn't you tell us that earthquake was coming?'. They could have done more to warn us, but we're just a tiny island.

RAFFIEL NIAS RESURRECTED

Rebuilt from the devastation of 2005 Raffiel Nias has become the premier surf retreat in Sorake. The three-level accommodation overlooks the famous wave that has built an entire economy on its flawless barrels.

Raffiel rebuilt the place after the tsunami, initially a two-level surf camp to accommodate travelling surfers.

Lagundri is a World Surf League destination for the professional surfing circuit. Many of the professional surfers stay at Raffiel's. It's the ultimate destination and the man himself has made lifelong friends with the likes of Kelly Slater and Hawaiians Billy Kemper, Jamie O'Brien and Koa Rothman. When Gold Coast surfing elite Parko, Mick and Dingo go to Nias, they stay at Raffiel's.

But the man himself has not surfed in years. The same wave that made him a local hero, was going to drag him down



Jason Oxenbridge



Jet Oxenbridge



Hunter Usher

– it became too addictive.

"I love the ocean and all the happiness it brings, but I decided that I had to focus on family and building a legacy for them, otherwise I would just surf all day," he says, with a wry grin.

"When I was little my father thought I was at school, but I would just do a lap and go surfing all day. I was 10-years-old riding broken boards that travelling surfers had left behind. When it was pumping there might be five people in the water. We would anchor a board in the channel and pack it with food and just stay out all day.

"The ocean consumed me. My wife said to me, 'how are you going to eat or build a life for your family if you surf all day'? Man, it was not easy, but I felt the pressure and focussed on my family and the business."

At the peak of his surfing prowess in his 20s, the ripping Raffiel was invited to a surfing comp in Brazil. In an honour bestowing national sporting stars, he was sent by the Indonesian Government to represent Nias after winning the Nias Pro. While he didn't win that event, the presence of this fourth-generation islander from Indonesia created plenty of buzz.

He also got to hang out with his surfing idols who would one day become regular visitors to Raffiel Nias.

A LASTING LEGACY

The Wau name is like royalty in these parts. Raffiel's grandfather was a gardener and landowner, while his father worked in government, riding his bicycle three hours to work in the town.

Real estate along the stretch of reef to the point was mostly owned by the Wau family. The first losmen was made from bamboo and was owned by Raffiel's cousin who was gifted the land by Raffiel's grandfather. The first Raffie Nias surf retreat was built in 1990 and offered basic amenities.

"I remember Aussies David and Larry helped my father build the kitchen and all the tourists came here to buy coconuts. That's how it started. My father would take travelling surfers fishing."

With sons Alvin and Agus now working at the retreat, it's in great hands as the next generation step up and continue to host people from all over the world, carrying the family tradition and ensuring the friendly atmosphere and ambience for which it is renowned.

COAST SURFER TAPS INTO THE STOKE

Gold Coast surfer Steve Michell has invested in a slice of paradise as the new partner at Raffiel Nias. Michell has been trekking to Nias since 2000 when he first stayed for two months. He was hooked, entranced by the perfect peeling waves.

"I have always loved the place and wanted to partner with an existing business owner who knew what was going on. Raffiel and I met and he mentioned he was looking for an investor to help rejuvenate the place," he says.

"I paid an architect to draw up plans and went back to the Gold Coast. I told Raffiel I would be back in three months with more money. When I returned Raffiel had already knocked the place down."

The rebuild took 12 months with 15 local builders and tradesmen onsite. It included 32 giant steel footings that had to be hammered into the reef. The impressive three level project now features a huge swimming pool and a range of accommodation to suit all budgets. More than just a surf retreat, it's a full surf lifestyle base designed for surfers.

Guests can wake up in an air-conditioned room, grab a coffee downstairs, check the waves, and paddle out within minutes. Its location is a consistent hit with Tripadvisor ratings showing an 'exceptional location score' around 9.7/10.

Across the road is Raffiel's brother Yunis. He repairs surfboards with the classic slogan 'me fix big holes good'. Next door is a medical centre and a church is a few metres down the road. For somewhere so remote, the necessities at your fingertips – a sweetener for visitors.





"It was a dream that I never thought would come true and now here I am, living and breathing this island paradise," says Michell. His next plan is to buy a fishing and charter boat to take guests on day trips and to access other surf breaks in the region.

SCOOTING FOR PRAWNS

We're walking to the point and 'Maurice' pulls up beside us on his scooter.

"You want prawn, big prawn?" After haggling on price, I order 2kgs of banana prawns.

Maurice says he must ride 90 minutes to the fishing canoes to get the fresh crustaceans. He arrives next day as planned and has a small foam esky packed with ice and the prawns. He's carrying a small set of scales so we can weigh them.

The Raffiel kitchen staff are friendly and accommodating as I secure a bench and prepare the prawns by flaying them and create a simple marinade of butter, chopped garlic and island limes. They look on with curiosity as this bule (tourist) chops out the poo chutes and rips off the heads.

Overlooking the bay we cook the prawns over hot coals from burning coconut husks. The garlic and lime fused delicacies are served on a bed of nasi goreng and we savour the moment, blissed out as another stunning sunset lights up the bay.

THE DONUT CARTEL OF LAGUNDRI

Along a 200-metre stretch of lucrative real estate from Raffiel Nias to Indicators at the top of the point, they are peddling day and night. Children as young as 10 are finding new customers: "You want donut?". They package the gluten-laden circular treats in Tupperware containers and for an extra hit, drop the donuts into a separate container of sugar. One of the dealers aka 'the shark' hits me up. I tell him no thanks, I'm an athlete. He frowns and knows this to be a lie as he's seen me surf. He challenges me to a game of pool. If I lose I have to buy donuts. He says not to worry, I can offload them to the women in the kitchen, as they have a penchant for the sugary treats. He beats me in pool convincingly. There are other surfers coming in, valued customers who he cannot keep waiting, and he scrambles across the reef to close another deal.

TRADITIONAL DISHES BURSTING WITH FLAVOUR

Donuts aside, Indonesia is known for its delicious food, or 'makan'. From classic nasi goreng and mie goreng to chicken and beef satays, rendangs and gado gado, loaded with spices. While the basic cuisine at Raffiel's will satisfy most traveling surfers with brekky wraps, omelettes and pizza and a few traditional dishes – variety, as they say, is the spice of life.

Within walking distance we discover scrumptious fish tacos at Beos' Pub and delicious curries and traditional rice dishes at nearby Seabreeze Restaurant. This quiet little eatery right on the bay has incredible views, amazing food and a relaxed ambience.

Owner and chef Maria Flony cooks a tasty beef stir fry with bell peppers and an array of curries using locally sourced ingredients.

The chef is protective of her delicious signature dishes and won't let too many cooking secrets leave the kitchen, other than to say: "it's all in the marinade, that's the difference".

There's also a western menu if you prefer a burger or fries, but we opt for the traditional offering and it doesn't disappoint.

CAPTURING THE MAGIC

With its perfectly almond-shaped walls of wonder and palm tree lined backdrop, Lagundri Bay is one of the most photographed waves in the world.

And one thing surfers love, besides getting the barrel of their lives, is proof of that ride and bragging rights to their mates back home. Here local photographers and videographers capture the magic with great skill. Leading the pack is Raffiel's son Agus, a local ripper and talented filmer, who not only records your surfing, but also offers constructive tips on how to improve.

Agus and others such as Efrika and Paul are the best in the biz and provide travelling surfers with a highlights package that showcases their experience. They are pretty well priced, compared to Bali and the Mentawai Islands.

(As I write this, the editor is already negotiating with wife Melissa about where the pic of his barrel will take pride of place on the living room wall).

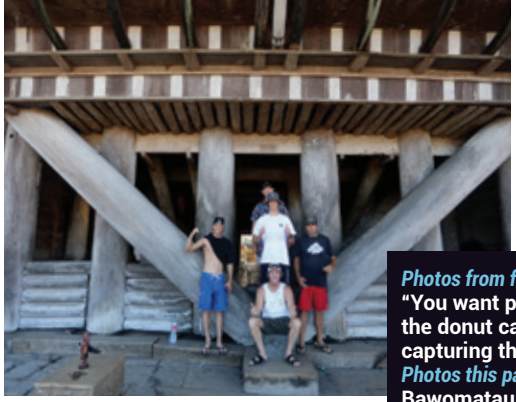
Check them out on Insta: raffielnias_surfvideo; efrikaw; paulinushulu_photography

ROCKSTARS AND SQUEALING PIGS

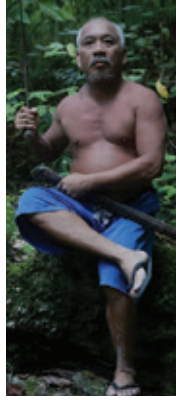
With the surf getting a little crowded we travel to 'Rockstars', a barrelling right hander about 45 minutes away. The wave is recommended for advanced surfers due to heavy, fast sections breaking over a shallow reef. Our surf guide Steve is a local out here and assures that it's high quality.

We arrive to see sometimes makeable waves slabbing across the reef. There's no channel to paddle out and access and exit points are sketchy via the reef in front of the wave. To make things more interesting, large concrete triangular blocks line the shoreline to protect the roadway and the seaside village from erosion.

As we're assessing conditions, a loud squeal blasts through the village in front











Photos from far left: **"You want prawn?"; the donut cartel; capturing the magic.** *Photos this page:* **Bawomataluo Village adventure.**





> "It was a dream … and now here I am, living and breathing this island paradise."
>
> Steve Michell

of the break. It's a death-defying curdle and we turn to see a pig hog-tied to the back of a motorcycle, screeching its little heart out as the rider flies through the village to deliver the aggrieved grunter to its awaiting fate. Later that night I opt for the chicken over the pork.

Legend has it that when surfers were adventuring through here on boat trips, they would sometimes anchor out the back and surf the wave. The locals were amazed to see such feats and called them 'rockstars'. Today frontman Stevo is out there with Jet and our mate Marty (MAD Surfboards) and they rip into waves and survive unscathed.

The session is not without drama however and perhaps more punk rock, than rockstar, Marty takes a nasty wipeout and snaps his board. Watching as half of his favourite sled washes toward the rocks, he's forced to swim in using the other half as a buffer between him and the razored reef, somehow getting washed through the jagged lava and to safety.

HILL OF THE SUN

Surf trips to remote locations can offer more than just surfing. Sometimes, a day out of the water sparks a sense of adventure – especially when there's a chance to visit an ancient culture and megalithic relics.

Scaling around 100 steps in the blazing sun might not be everyone's cup of Sumatran swamp coffee, but as the ocean goes quiet for a day, our adventure takes us to Bawomataluo Village about 30 minutes from Sorake Beach.

Like a scene from an Avatar v Indiana Jones epic, this mountain top village and its 300-year-old culture has been preserved for centuries.

Its name translates as 'sun hill' and it's more than a step back in time – it's a time-warped leap into an ancient past.

Located in the southern Nias district of Teluk Dalam, there are around 500 structures covering five hectares, 270 meters above sea level.

Each of the timber buildings face each other and are around 4 meters apart. In the middle of the complex is a stone arrangement used for ceremonial customs and rituals.

The jewel in this crown is the king's temple; an imposing structure built in the 18th century with giant timber beams like a monstrous Jenga puzzle.

According to legend, the king would select the prettiest women from the village to stand naked at the top of the hill to encourage the labourers and give them strength to carry the heavy timber pylons. No HR or cancel culture back then to question the king's strategic tactics and by all accounts his abstract incentives paid great dividends.

There are no nails in the structure which is two stories high with access to the top floor via 45-degree timber stairs.

King Laowo was founder of the Kingdom and was a descendant of the Gomo family. The king's 'castle' is now occupied by the heirs from the fourth generation of the Laowo family. In the main room, dozens of skeletal pig heads hang on the wall. It's believed the pigs were used for ceremonies and the villagers would gather around for pork soup. The king would hang the heads as a reminder of the good fortune he brought to his people.

Outside is the ancient seat of the king. The 10-metre-long stone platform was used when delivering messages to his people.

Another tradition is Hombo Batu or stone jumping. We're advised that if we pay $250,000 rupiah (AUD $20), a warrior will jump over the stone wall.

The ritual has been performed for generations and is believed to test the readiness of warriors for war. We wait as the guide heads into the village to prepare the stone jumper.

He appears like a matador with a traditional gold and red trim vest. He



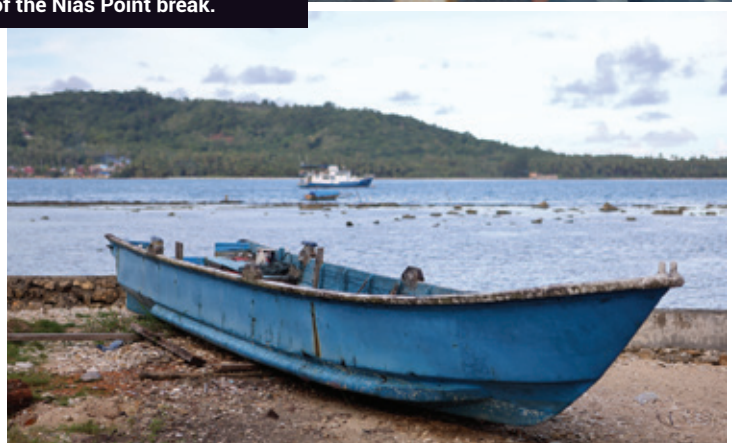






Photos left to right, top to bottom: **The boys enjoying sunset pizza and prawns; Ox returns from an afternoon session; Unmistakeable Raffiel Nias sign; Lunch at Seabreeze Restaurant; Fish Tacos at Beo's Pub; Lagundri Bay on dusk; View from Beo's Pub of the Nias Point break.**













Photos L to R: **Potholes on the road to Afulu; Lagundri Bay barrels; sunset fishing.**

has no shoes and hops and jumps on the spot as he eyes the target – a two metre stone structure that he must clear barefooted before landing on the pebble stone. He springs toward the vertical stone with determination and flies over it, landing safely on the other side.

According to UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the Bawomataluo settlement has 'outstanding universal value' as its culture and environment have been maintained and reserved for generations.

On the way back from Bawomataluo our trusty guide Agus suggests a swim at a nearby waterfall. We trek into the deep jungle with a local landowner, who brings a machete. The falls are stunning and cascade through multiple pools. Bring your mozzie repellent as they'll eat you alive as you navigate the 200m track in. It's an uphill return and will test the fitness, so have plenty of water handy. .

SEARCHING FOR AFULU

"We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

This TS Elliot quote is etched into my psyche as our curiosity is sparked by a rumour that a hidden lefthander is going unridden to the north of the island. After careful planning we make the call to travel up the coast to Afulu – one of the lesser-known gems on the north coast of Nias.

Far from the spotlight and ripping locals of Lagundri Bay, the village of Afulu is quiet, friendly, and largely untouched by tourism. It's mostly farming and fishing territory and with minimal development the vibe is pure and raw Indonesia. With its exposure to long-range SW swells and lack of crowds, Afulu sounded like an option to chase uncrowded perfection.

Research shows that on the right day, it delivers big, powerful walls with the occasional barrel section on the inside.

The goat track masquerading as a road takes four hours with potholes like swimming pools that could swallow cars whole. In one village near Sirombu the dirt track turns to mud as we tip-toe the car through for 40 minutes.

Upon arriving at lunch, we find a surf camp perched in front of the famous Afulu left. Unfortunately, it's blown out and as we wonder where to go to find food, we get hammered by a storm and onshore winds for the entire afternoon.

Soon we meet Marcus who brings lunch in Tupperware containers from the nearby village. There are no menus out here. It's chicken and rice. As Jet and I sit on the edge of this island, off an island, off an island, exposed to the brutality and wonder of the Indian Ocean, the power goes out.

In the dark I tell Jet this is the old-school Indo – before hot water, air-con, menus, pool tables and surf guides. But with more storms forecast to batter us tomorrow we make the call to head back to Lagundri where the wind is offshore and the sun is shining.

Before we depart in the morning, I paddle out solo and navigate the shifty take-off over a reef ledge. It has potential and I score a couple of bumpy, storm-ravaged waves.

It's another four hours back along the same bumpy track as yesterday. And despite the disdain for having to relive that experience, the mood is upbeat as we crank the tunes and return to the creature comforts and cranking waves of Lagundri Bay.

HIDDEN AIRLINE COSTS HIT SURFERS

The downside of flying with an airline that has little or no competition is that it can set the rules – and the prices.

Take Indonesian carrier Wings Air and its parent company, Lion Air. If you're planning a surf trip, be prepared for an unwelcome surprise.

One of the few airlines servicing the route between Medan, Sumatra, and Nias, it charges passengers 1,000,000 Indonesian rupiah (approximately $80 AUD) per surfboard, each way. NOTE: The fee applies to each individual board—not to a board bag. With a standard three-board quiver, the additional charges can quickly add hundreds of dollars to the cost of a trip.

This policy is catching thousands of surfers off guard. I pre-paid AUD $160 in excess baggage fees when booking online, believing the payment would cover my board bag. However, upon checking in, Lion Air staff advised the excess baggage allowance applied only to standard luggage and not to surfboards. The boards would incur a separate fee under the airline's sporting equipment policy.

Travelling with only carry-on backpacks and surfboards, the pre-paid excess baggage I paid could not be refunded. When *Ocean Road* sought clarification, Lion Air referred to its published terms and conditions, which specify that surfboards are treated as sporting equipment and incur a separate charge from excess baggage allowances. This is a wrought, plain and simple, and a reminder for surfers travelling to Nias to carefully check airline policies before booking.

Bookings for Raffiel Nias Hotel visit www.raffielnias.com or call Alvin on +62 822 7487 0319.



BATU KARANG:

Building barefoot luxury the authentic way

Words: **Steve and Estelle Hunt**
Photography: **Brian Usher** *usherusher.com*

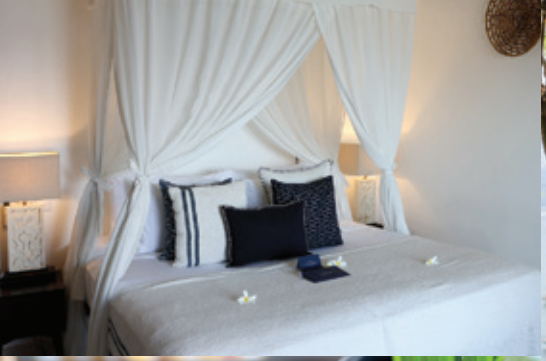
How the Sinclair family transformed a remote Indonesian island into one of Nusa Lembongan's most authentic luxury resort experiences — without losing the soul of the destination.

On the hillside overlooking Jungut Batu Bay, where the turquoise waters of Nusa Lembongan stretch across the reefs east of Bali, Batu Karang Resort & Spa feels less like a resort and more like something that grew organically from its surroundings.

Stone pathways wind through tropical gardens. Villas rise from coral stone. Timber roofs open to the sea breeze. Everything feels connected to the landscape. That's fitting, because nothing about Batu Karang happened quickly.

When the Sinclair family first acquired land on Nusa Lembongan in 2003, the vision was modest: ten villas and a small restaurant. But building on an island off an island quickly changed those plans.

There was little infrastructure, no established supply chains and no modern machinery waiting to begin construction. Everything – from power generation and water systems to sewage treatment – had to be created from scratch.







Photos left to right: **Muntigs Bar & Restaurant; our luxury bedroom; arrival cocktail; staircase view of the ocean; arrival at Nusa Lombongan on the Kia Koa fast boat; breakfast of champions.**

"To make it work, we had to grow," explains Troy Sinclair.

What began as ten villas expanded gradually into what is today Lembongan's premier luxury resort: a sophisticated 46-key property offering everything from one-bedroom villas to expansive five-bedroom residences designed for families and groups.

Along the way came restaurants, wellness facilities, conference spaces and a wedding lawn, each addition driven by guest demand and operational necessity.

Today, Batu Karang employs around 165 staff, many from the island itself.

Despite its size, however, the resort has retained the character of a boutique property. It reflects the slower pace and authenticity of Nusa Lembongan itself – a world away from the busier parts of Bali.

That has always been intentional.

"We didn't want a hotel you could find in Singapore or Sydney," Troy says.

"We wanted a resort that complemented the magic of Nusa Lembongan."

Rather than importing a generic luxury formula, the Sinclairs focused on a distinctly Balinese and Indonesian aesthetic. Natural stone, carved timber, open-air bathrooms and lush gardens soften the built environment and ensure the resort feels part of the island rather than imposed upon it.

The result is what Troy describes as "barefoot luxury" – a balance between comfort and authenticity.

If the design shapes the environment, the people define the experience.

At Batu Karang, service is intentionally relaxed and genuine. Staff are encouraged to engage naturally rather than follow rigid hospitality scripts, creating a warmth that guests remember long after they leave.

"A big part of the Batu experience comes down to interaction with staff," Troy says. "Guests return not just for the villas or the views, but for the people."

The resort's management philosophy extends to its workforce. A five-day working week – uncommon in Indonesia's hospitality sector – helps staff maintain a healthy balance between work, family and community life. That connection to community also influences how Batu Karang approaches tourism.

> **"We didn't want a hotel you could find in Singapore or Sydney. We wanted a resort that complemented the magic of Nusa Lembongan."**
>
> **– Troy Sinclair**





Right: **Troy Sinclair charging at one of the many secret surf spots Indonesia still has to offer.** *Below:* **Cocktail hour at The Deck Cafe & Bar.**



Rather than encouraging guests to remain inside the resort, the team actively promotes exploration of the island and support for local businesses.

"Fitting in with your neighbours and the local community is crucial to success," Troy says. "So it's Lembongan first, Batu Karang second."

It's a philosophy that benefits both the island and visitors.

Batu Karang serves as the perfect base from which to explore Nusa Lembongan and its neighbouring islands. Guests can snorkel vibrant reefs, dive world-class sites, visit the dramatic cliffs of Nusa Penida or cross the famous Yellow Bridge to discover the quieter island of Nusa Ceningan.

The resort itself overlooks the renowned surf breaks of Playgrounds, Lacerations and Shipwrecks, while excursions to nearby Manta Point offer unforgettable encounters with majestic manta rays.

Like many tourism businesses, Batu Karang faced significant challenges during the pandemic.

The resort was in the middle of a major expansion program, including new wellness facilities and upgraded dining experiences, when international travel came to a halt.

"We were in a very difficult position," Troy recalls.

"But we wanted to keep as many local staff employed as possible, so we used the time to improve and maintain the resort."

While guests were absent, teams repainted villas, upgraded gardens and refined facilities, ensuring the property emerged stronger when tourism returned.

> "It's Lembongan first, Batu Karang second." – Troy Sinclair



By 2023, the expansion was complete. Today, the focus has shifted from growth to refinement.

Among the resort's highlights is Lulur Spa, offering traditional Balinese massages, facials, body treatments and rejuvenation packages.

There are three swimming pools, including a stunning infinity-edge pool overlooking Jungut Batu Bay and the distant silhouette of Mount Agung. Guests can also enjoy a lap pool and a swim-up pool bar.

Dining is centred around Muntigs Bar & Restaurant, which combines spectacular views with a menu showcasing international, Asian and contemporary Indonesian cuisine. Fresh seafood features prominently, alongside vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options.

For evening drinks, The Howff whisky and wine bar provides a completely different atmosphere. Styled like a classic gentleman's retreat, it features Chesterfields, fine whiskies and an impressive cocktail menu overlooking the bay below.

More recently, Batu Karang has expanded its wellness offering with a renovated fitness and recovery centre complete with a fully equipped gym, two-lane lap pool, ice bath and steam room.

As Bali and its surrounding islands continue to evolve, Batu Karang finds itself at an important moment.

Tourism demand is growing. Traveller expectations continue to rise.

Yet the challenge facing the resort is not how to become bigger.

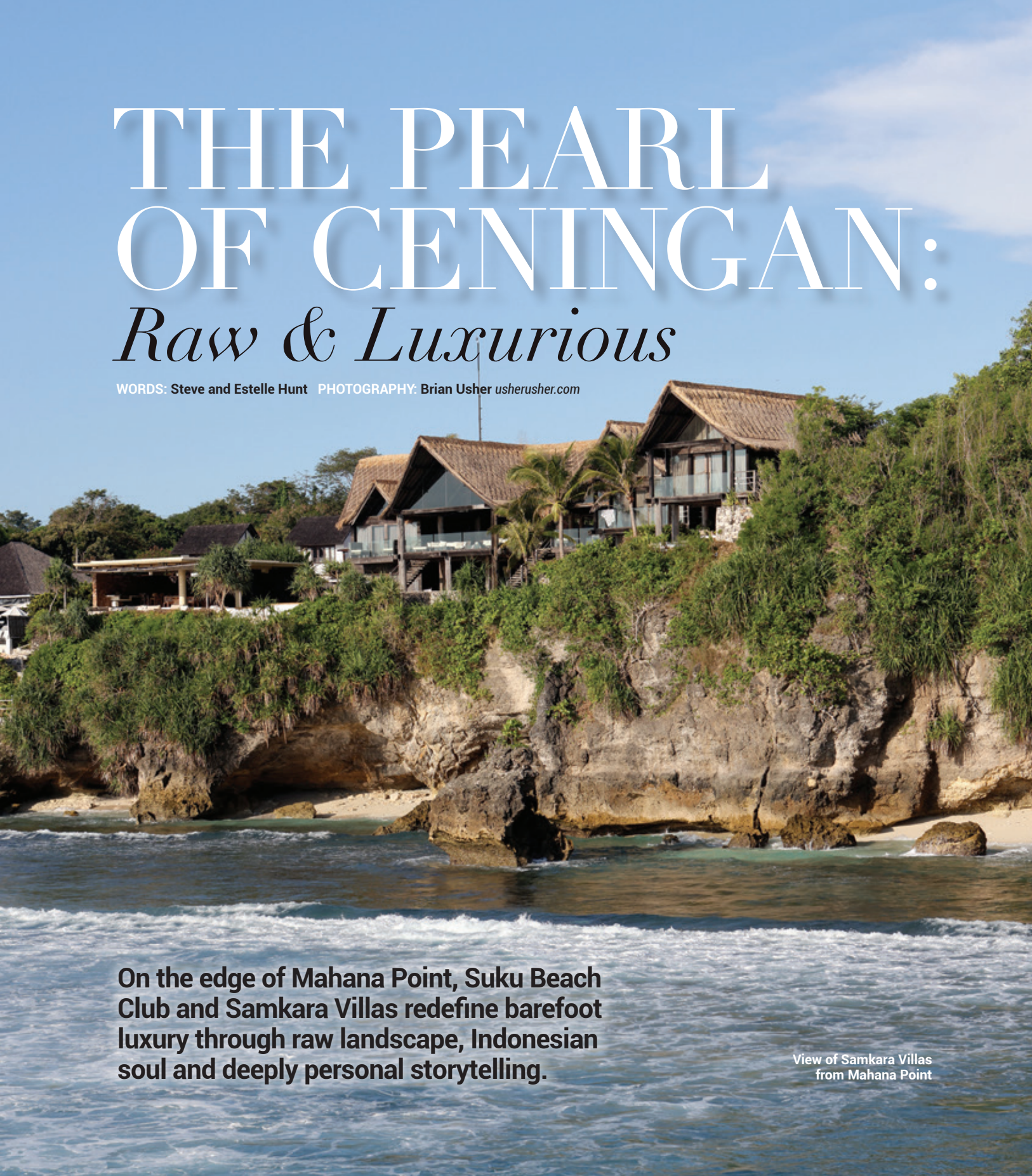
It is how to remain true to the values that made it successful in the first place.

The next chapter for Batu Karang is not about reinvention. It is about refining a character built over more than two decades – one grounded in authentic hospitality, community connection and a deep respect for the island it calls home.

In a region increasingly defined by rapid development, that commitment may be its greatest luxury of all.

THE PEARL OF CENINGAN: *Raw & Luxurious*

WORDS: Steve and Estelle Hunt PHOTOGRAPHY: Brian Usher *usherusher.com*



On the edge of Mahana Point, Suku Beach Club and Samkara Villas redefine barefoot luxury through raw landscape, Indonesian soul and deeply personal storytelling.

View of Samkara Villas from Mahana Point

There is something about Indonesia that keeps drawing people back. Perhaps it's the contrast: chaos and calm, tradition and modernity, rugged landscapes and refined experiences.

Few places capture that duality more beautifully than Samkara Villas and Suku Beach Club on the emerging island of Nusa Ceningan.

Perched above the famous Mahana Point, where powerful ocean swells crash against the coastline after travelling thousands of kilometres across open water, Samkara and Suku offer front-row seats to nature's theatre. Yet they do so from a setting of remarkable comfort and understated luxury.

For Australian entrepreneur Justin Werner, the journey to creating this destination began in unlikely circumstances. His first introduction to Indonesia came amid the political unrest of Jakarta in 1998. What could have been a fleeting encounter instead sparked a lifelong connection with the country.

Nearly three decades later, Werner and his wife, Indah, have created a hospitality offering that feels less like a commercial venture and more like an extension of their lives and passions.

"It has absolutely been a labour of love for us," Werner says.

"Everything at Samkara reflects our journey through Indonesia. Some of the timber used throughout the villas came from Borneo, where I spent years working. It's distinctly Indonesian – raw, authentic and beautiful."





Photos: **Mahana Point; Steve and the girls enjoy the swing; Samkara Villa.**



That passion is evident from the moment guests arrive.

Samkara is a private seven-bedroom luxury compound comprising a spectacular three-bedroom main residence and two separate two-bedroom villas. The property features three swimming pools, including an oceanfront infinity pool and spa, a full-sized tennis court, multiple dining and entertaining spaces, a library, outdoor barbecue pavilion and dedicated staff.

Most importantly, every corner of the property is positioned to capture sweeping views of the ocean and Mahana Point.

The vision behind Samkara was shaped by Werner's years working throughout Indonesia's outer islands. Before hospitality, he built a career in the resources sector, living and working in some of the country's most remote regions, including establishing a small gold mining operation in Borneo.

Those experiences exposed him to a side of Indonesia rarely seen by visitors and instilled a deep appreciation for its cultural diversity, craftsmanship and natural beauty.

If Samkara represents the soul of the precinct, Suku Beach Club is undoubtedly its heart.

The story began when Justin and Indah first visited Nusa Ceningan around eight years ago.

"It felt like Bali 20 or 30 years ago," Werner recalls.

Untouched, authentic and

"Everything in Samkara is a reflection of us in some way... it is distinctly Indonesia – raw but beautiful at the same time." – Justin Werner





Welcome cocktails with Justin Werner.

refreshingly unhurried, the island immediately resonated. The headland where Suku and Samkara now stand was little more than raw land owned by a local family. Through friendships, trust and a shared vision, Werner secured a long-term lease and began building what would become Suku Beach Club.

The name "Suku" loosely translates to "my tribe" – an appropriate reflection of the venue's welcoming and community-focused atmosphere.

Unlike many of Bali's larger beach clubs, Suku doesn't rely on glamour or exclusivity. Instead, it embraces a more relaxed form of luxury that feels connected to its surroundings.

Its greatest asset may be its unique setting. Just metres from the beach club, powerful waves crash over Mahana Point, creating a dramatic spectacle. Yet directly below lies a calm, protected bay ideal for swimming, paddleboarding and families.

That contrast between power and tranquillity defines the experience.

"It's rare," Werner says. "You can be surfing quality waves offshore while your children are swimming safely in the bay. Or you can simply sit back with a cocktail and enjoy the view."

> "You can be surfing decent waves, and your kids are right here in the bay, completely protected."
>
> — Justin Werner



Spend an afternoon at Suku and the atmosphere quickly becomes apparent. There are no velvet ropes or pretensions. Guests drift between the pool, beach and bar as the afternoon rolls towards one of the island's spectacular sunsets.

At the centre of the venue is the resort-style pool and swim-up bar, which acts as both social hub and vantage point for the ever-changing ocean panorama.

The food philosophy mirrors the overall approach – simple, authentic and focused on quality ingredients.

While international favourites feature on the menu, Indonesian cuisine takes centre stage. Rich, flavourful local dishes sit alongside fresh seafood and lighter beachside fare designed for long tropical afternoons.

Guests can also enjoy locally sourced seafood prepared to order, either at Suku or within the privacy of Samkara. Private chefs and curated dining experiences add another layer of exclusivity for those seeking something special.

Beyond the beach club, Nusa Ceningan offers an increasingly rare luxury: simplicity.

Guests can cycle the island's quiet roads, explore local villages, dine at traditional warungs such as long-time local favourite Yuyu's, or venture further afield on snorkelling, diving and boating excursions.

Wellness travellers are also discovering the island's appeal. Its slower pace, natural beauty and relative seclusion make it an ideal setting for retreats, fitness escapes and restorative holidays.

Back at Samkara, the design reflects Werner's desire to create

something unique rather than formulaic.

"I didn't want another luxury resort that looks like every other luxury resort," he says. "I wanted people to walk in and say, 'Wow'."

Natural materials, open-plan living spaces and a seamless connection between indoors and outdoors create an atmosphere that feels both sophisticated and organic. It's luxury without excess – elegant, comfortable and deeply connected to place.

The appeal is increasingly international. While Australian families remain a core market, visitors now arrive from across Europe, Indonesia and beyond, attracted by the combination of adventure, privacy and authenticity.

What ultimately distinguishes Samkara and Suku, however, is not the accommodation, the food or even the remarkable setting. It is the sense that this place has been created with genuine care and long-term commitment.

For Justin and Indah, Nusa Ceningan is not simply a business opportunity. It is home.

As the island evolves and attracts increasing attention, they remain focused on preserving the balance that first drew them here - between growth and authenticity, comfort and nature, luxury and simplicity.

In an increasingly homogenised travel world, Samkara Villas and Suku Beach Club offer something genuinely rare: a destination with soul.

And perhaps that's what the name Suku really represents. Not just a tribe, but a gathering place for travellers seeking something authentic, memorable and deeply connected to Indonesia itself in ultimate, understated luxury.





Photos top to bottom: **A day out to swim with Manta Rays; our Samkara Villa bathroom; plunge pool for each villa; Suku Beach Club just next door; sealife of Nusa Lombongan.**

I've just broken up with my partner. *Can I kick him out of my house?*

When a relationship ends, the house you own doesn't automatically become yours to control – Nyst Legal Director Brendan Nyst on the messy legal reality of evicting a partner.

Words: **Brendan Nyst** Dispute Resolution & Litigation, Wills & Estates, Defamation, Nyst Legal www.nystlegal.com.au

The answer to this question depends on the nature of the relationship, and the terms on which your partner is living with you. Firstly, just because you're the legal owner of the house, and your partner's living with you without any written tenancy agreement in place, that doesn't necessarily mean that you can demand they vacate the premises if and when the relation sours. If they've been paying consistent rent (or contributing consistently to the weekly outgoings), then it is very likely they are residing at the property pursuant to an implied residential tenancy agreement. Even if they've been living there rent free, which is often the case in such circumstances, most likely they have been living with you pursuant to an implied tenancy agreement or even a licence to occupy. Determining whether your cohabitation constitutes an implied tenancy or a licence to occupy is not always straight forward, because a decision to move in with one's romantic partner very rarely starts with a formal, defined agreement as to the basis upon which you have decided to move in together under the same roof. Most usually it requires a close consideration of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the move.



"Just because you're the legal owner of the house doesn't necessarily mean you can demand your partner vacate the moment the relationship sours."

If, as a matter of fact and law, your partner is residing at the property pursuant to an implied or verbal residential tenancy agreement, under the relevant provisions of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, you would need to give him a formal Notice to Vacate, in the appropriate form, before you could lawfully insist he hit the bricks. If he still refused to go, you could apply to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a warrant for possession.

Of course, it is a completely different scenario if you're separating from a long-term defacto spouse. In that case, he would likely have an equitable right to reside at the premises, and perhaps even an equitable right to a share of the property itself. Any defacto relationship of more than 2 years gives rise to a right to apply for a property settlement, and spousal maintenance through the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, if the relationship breaks down. In property settlement disputes, it is entirely open to a party to approach the court and ask for orders regarding where the respective parties are entitled to reside, and who might be responsible for the associated costs of their accommodation. In fact, if you own the home and your long term partner has no assets, he may well be entitled to ask the court for orders that he be allowed to continue to reside there, rent free, until the dispute is finally determined.

And of course, one needs to be extremely careful with any decision to unceremoniously evict a domestic partner, in circumstances where they have nowhere else to go. Depending on how you go about it, it could very well be argued that such an action constitutes domestic violence. The Domestic and Family Violence Act actually contains specific ouster provisions which can require one party to a domestic relationship to vacate the matrimonial residence. Under those provisions, it is not unknown for the owner of a property to be evicted from their own home by the courts, following allegations of domestic violence. So be careful, and make sure you obtain proper legal advice at an early stage to avoid potentially very messy complications.

"One needs to be extremely careful with any decision to unceremoniously evict a domestic partner ..."

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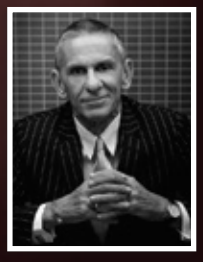
WE TAKE THE RIGHT APPROACH TO FAMILY LAW

No Real Winners

Words: **Chris Nyst**
Portrait Photography: **Brian Usher**
Lifestyle Photography: **Camila Quintero Franco @unsplash.com**



As the world watched the Lindsay Clancy murder trial end in a hung jury, veteran Gold Coast defence lawyer Chris Nyst reflects on his own first murder case — and the crude lottery of the insanity defence.

Murder trials are tough. Every one of them involves the intricate unfolding of a tragic tale, and every one is at once a work of dark, dramatic theatre and a crude lottery in which there are no real winners. They are often painful and invariably sad, at least for someone, and usually for everyone involved.

So, it is perhaps unsurprising that in the crazy, high-stakes world of US entertainment, televised murder trials have become highly popular, prime-time viewing. As long ago as 1995, a daily average of 5.5 million Americans watched the live cable television coverage of the O.J. Simpson murder trial every day throughout its nine month run-time. An estimated 150 million viewers tuned in live to hear the verdict delivered, meaning that at that brief moment in time 91% of all the television sets turned on anywhere in America were tuned in to the coverage.

This year, more than 30 years later, the murder trial of Lindsay Clancy – a 36-year-old Massachusetts mother charged with murdering her three young children aged five, three and eight months – proved again that real life tragedy is still a best seller, and not just in America. For four weeks, court-watchers across the globe tuned into YouTube, cable news, and social media platforms running polls and interactive segments with tens of thousands of active engagements, as the trial lawyers called more than 80 witnesses and tendered hundreds of exhibits, while the jury pondered, not whether Ms Clancy killed her children – she admits she did – but whether she should be found not guilty on the grounds of insanity.

Her legal team argued Lindsay Clancy was a loving, dedicated mother, but killed her children in a terrifying delirium of postpartum psychosis, a rare mental illness that can follow childbirth. Her lawyer told the jury that, less than three weeks after being discharged from a psychiatric hospital, Ms Clancy heard a voice telling her to kill the children. She complied, then immediately afterwards attempted suicide – unsuccessfully – leaving her permanently paralysed from the waist down.

The first murder case I ever did, in the late 1970s, ended with a verdict of not guilty on the grounds of insanity.

My client was a rather insular young man who had lived quietly with his mother in their humble suburban home, before he one day went next door and killed his elderly neighbour with an axe. I was called to the scene shortly after his arrest and, although I was just an inexperienced young lawyer at the time, fortunately I received some invaluable professional guidance that day from a very senior barrister. He told me to get a psychiatrist in to see the defendant immediately. Not tomorrow, or the next day, not in a week or two's time, but that day, right then and there. It took some wrangling but, after a series of frantic phone calls, I managed to have my client psychiatrically assessed later that night in the police watchhouse. When the doctor saw him, he was still in the throes of his derangement, deeply disturbed by the weird voices and hallucinations that had beset him. The doctor's contemporaneous observations of the young man's distress were absolutely critical to the ultimate outcome.

Of course, like any defendant acquitted on the grounds of insanity at that time, my client did not simply walk free. He was committed to an asylum to be held there "at Her Majesty's pleasure, " a direction that often saw people spend the rest of their days in State confinement. Lindsay Clancy was potentially looking at a similar outcome in her trial. If convicted of murder, she faced possible imprisonment for life, but even if she was acquitted on the grounds of insanity, the trial judge could order she be confined to a mental health facility until assessed to be no longer of danger to the public.

As it turned out, she was neither convicted nor acquitted. In America, as in Queensland, the verdict in a murder trial must be unanimous. In other words, all twelve jurors must agree, guilty or not guilty. If they can't, the whole harrowing ordeal becomes a do-over.

In America, as in Queensland, the verdict in a murder trial must be unanimous. If they can't, the whole harrowing ordeal becomes a do-over.

After four days of deliberation, Lindsay Clancy's jury told trial Judge William Sullivan they were deadlocked, whereupon His Honour promptly directed them to go straight back to the jury room and try again.

That may sound harsh, but it is an almost invariable practice in such circumstances, even in Australia. Here in Queensland, it is called a "Black Direction" – a gentle exhortation to the jury to go back and try harder to reach unanimity. And if it doesn't work the first time, most judges will try and try again. I once did a 17-day trial in which the judge handed out no fewer than four Black Directions, before an exasperated jury foreman eventually convinced His Honour no further efforts could possibly resolve their impasse.

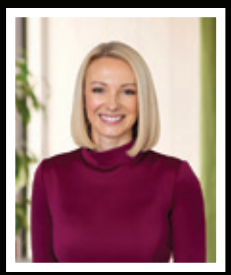
Sadly, Lindsay Clancy's trial eventually ended that same way, with a hung jury and the declaration of a mistrial. So, her prosecutors now will decide whether to run the whole process again with an entirely new jury.

One murder trial is tough, for anyone. Two is a nightmare.

■ *Visit nystlegal.com.au/blog for more.*



The Succession Shadow ARE YOU HIRING FOR THE FUTURE OR THE PAST?



CEO succession decisions often reflect the strengths and shortcomings of the outgoing leader. Learn how Boards can define future leadership requirements and build a CEO search around strategic priorities.



Words: **Clare McCartin, Seamus Scanlon**, *KordaMentha*
Lifestyle Photography: **@pressfoto**, *www.magnific.com*

Every CEO casts a succession shadow. A highly successful CEO can become the template for what comes next, but a more difficult tenure can leave Boards looking for capabilities they felt were missing last time.

Both responses are understandable, but they can also narrow the search before it has properly begun. Because the next CEO isn't being appointed to lead the organisation of the past five years; they are being appointed to lead the organisation of the next five. Those can be two very different jobs.

After more than two decades advising on executive appointments, one pattern has become increasingly clear to us: the outgoing CEO often has more influence over the search for their successor than anyone realises.

A strong operator can make operational credentials central to the next brief. Difficult stakeholder relationships can make stakeholder management non-negotiable. Successful sector experience can make that same background feel essential, even when the organisation's next phase may require something different.

In those moments, the previous CEO becomes the reference point against which the next one is defined. We think of this as the succession shadow.

Boards naturally draw on what worked well and what didn't under the previous CEO. The challenge is keeping that perspective in balance when considering what the organisation will need in the years ahead.

> "The greatest succession risk may be appointing a leader perfectly equipped for the challenges the organisation has already solved."
>
> *Clare McCartin and Seamus Scanlon, KordaMentha Executive Search*

START WITH THE FUTURE

Strong organisations are constantly evolving. Strategies change, new markets emerge, technology creates opportunity, customer expectations shift and growth brings greater complexity.

The leader who was exactly right for one chapter may not be the leader required for the next.

An organisation entering new markets may need a different CEO from the one who built its domestic position. A business commercialising new capabilities may require different leadership again. A business that has expanded rapidly may reach a point where its next phase requires greater integration, discipline and execution.

That is why some of the most important work in executive search happens before anyone starts searching. It begins before the position description, candidate specification or the first list of names.

There is one question we believe every Board should be able to answer before commencing a CEO search:

What will be fundamentally different about this organisation by the end of the next CEO's first term?

The answer should shape the search, because it requires the Board to be clear about its strategy, its ambition and what the next leader is being appointed to achieve.

EVIDENCE, NOT RESEMBLANCE

CEO appointments are high-consequence decisions, and when the stakes are high, familiarity can feel reassuring. A candidate from the same sector, similar scale or a familiar pathway can appear to offer certainty.

But familiarity isn't necessarily evidence of future success. The greatest succession risk may be appointing a leader perfectly equipped for the challenges the organisation has already solved.

This doesn't mean Boards should deliberately seek an unconventional candidate. It means they should define success with greater precision.

The useful questions are practical ones:

- Who has built what needs to be built?
- Who has navigated comparable complexity?
- Who has successfully led through the kind of growth, transformation or change this organisation is approaching?

Sometimes the evidence leads exactly where you expected, but sometimes, it doesn't.

Some of the strongest appointments we've observed have occurred when a Board has challenged an assumption about what the successful candidate should look like. Not because it lowered the bar, but because it made the bar more relevant.

LEADERSHIP IS A STRATEGIC DECISION

Leadership appointments are some of the most important decisions an organisation makes about its future.

The right CEO can accelerate strategy, unlock growth, build organisational capability and position it for its next phase of development.

That's why the search shouldn't begin with the question of who can replace the outgoing CEO. It should begin with where the organisation is heading, what will be required to get there and the leadership needed to deliver the future.

At KordaMentha Executive Search, we see leadership appointments as strategic decisions that shape an organisation's future. The same organisations that engage us to navigate transformation, growth, governance challenges and critical moments understand that leadership capability often sits at the centre of those outcomes.

Our work begins by understanding where an organisation is heading, what will be required to get there and the leadership needed to deliver that future.

The outgoing CEO should inform that thinking, not define it.

For more visit kordamentha.com



Brains, balance and empathy: DAKOTA HALLETT

Dakota Hallett is the latest partner at Richardson Murray Family Law. Navigating the challenges of AI and learning to balance a career and motherhood, she took some time out of her busy schedule to chat with *Ocean Road*.

Words: **Jason Oxenbridge** Photography: **Nick Sterkenburg**

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR INSPIRATION TO STUDY LAW AND WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO FAMILY LAW IN PARTICULAR?

Law wasn't always the plan for me. I studied sciences at school with the intention of becoming a pharmacist however I changed my mind when applying at universities and realised I wanted a career that was more people-focused but still a professional environment. I was drawn to law because I loved the combination of problem solving, strategy and working with people. After I undertook a family law elective during my studies, I knew it was for me – it really resonated. You meet people at what can be one of the most difficult and uncertain periods of their lives, and you have an opportunity to help them navigate that and come out the other side.

I also love that no two matters are ever the same. Family law requires you to understand the law, but also people, relationships, and personalities. You need to be strategic and commercially minded while still having empathy and understanding what really matters to the person sitting in front of you.

YOU HAVE EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN ALL AREAS OF FAMILY LAW, INCLUDING DIVORCE, PROPERTY, PARENTING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. IS THERE ONE AREA THAT YOU'RE FOCUSED ON?

I practise across both parenting and property matters, including complex and high conflict matters. I particularly enjoy matters that require a strong strategic approach and where there are a number of moving pieces to work through. People often come to us completely overwhelmed and unable to see what life will look like on the other side. Being able to give someone clarity, a strategy and ultimately help them move forward is incredibly rewarding.

CONGRATS ON BECOMING PARTNER THIS YEAR. WHAT KIND OF DISCIPLINE AND MINDSET IS REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL?

Thank you! Becoming Partner has been a huge milestone for me, particularly at this stage of my career and so soon after becoming a mum. For me, it has been about consistency and taking ownership. I have always approached my role as more than simply managing the files on my desk. I have been very focused on building my own practice, developing genuine relationships with referrers and clients, contributing to the growth of the firm, and taking responsibility for outcomes.

I don't think there is one big moment that gets you there. It is the accumulation of small decisions over a long period of time — showing up, doing what you say you are going to do, backing yourself and being willing to have difficult conversations when they are required.

Becoming Partner is obviously something I am incredibly proud of, but I also see it as the beginning of another chapter rather than the end goal. I am excited about what we are building at Richardson Murray and having the opportunity to help shape where the firm goes next.

YOU STUDIED A BACHELOR OF LAW AND BUSINESS AT GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY AND LATER COMPLETED PRACTICAL LEGAL TRAINING AND PRACTICE MANAGEMENT COURSE THROUGH THE COLLEGE OF LAW - RECEIVING AWARDS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE ACROSS ALL 5 YEARS STUDY AND GRADUATED WITHIN THE TOP 5 PER CENT OF THE COHORT. HOW DID THAT HELP TO SHAPE YOUR EARLY CAREER?

Throughout my degree, I also worked as a paralegal for several years which meant I was learning the theory while gaining practical experience at the same time. That combination really shaped the lawyer I became as by the time I had graduated, I already had a strong understanding of how a legal practice operated, lawyer-client relationships and how the law extended beyond the classroom.



Founding Partner Stephanie Murray pictured with newly appointed Partner Dakota Hallett.

> **"I was drawn to law because I loved the combination of problem solving, strategy and working with people.** – *Dakota Hallett*

I recently had the opportunity to return to Griffith as a panellist at its Law Students Association Careers Fair, which Richardson Murray sponsored. Sitting on the other side of the room speaking to students where I once was, felt like a lovely full-circle moment.

AI IS BLANKETING WORKSPACES EVERYWHERE – WHAT IMPACTS ARE YOU SEEING IN YOUR FIELD AND HOW ARE YOU EMBRACING OR HARNESSING THE AI JUGGERNAUT?

AI is going to fundamentally change the way lawyers work, and I think that is something the profession should embrace rather than fear.

There are enormous opportunities to use technology to make legal practice more efficient, whether that is assisting with research, document analysis, first-pass drafting or reducing some of the administrative work that traditionally consumes a lawyer's day. Used properly, that gives us more time to focus on the work that actually requires our judgment and expertise.

Family law is also an incredibly human area of practice. A client isn't simply coming to us for legal information. They need strategy, judgment, trust, and someone who can understand the personalities and dynamics involved in their particular situation. AI can be an incredibly useful tool, but it cannot replace that relationship. I think the lawyers who will benefit most from AI are those who learn how to use it intelligently while understanding where its limitations lie.

YOU MENTIONED ONE OF YOUR PROUDEST MOMENTS WAS BECOMING A MUM. HOW'S THE WORK/LIFE BALANCE?

I'm not sure I would say I've quite perfected the balance yet with her having only just turned one. Becoming a mum to my daughter Sunday has probably made me much more conscious of how I use my time.

When I'm working, I am very focused and efficient because I want the time I have with her to actually feel like time with her. It has taught me that being busy and being productive aren't necessarily the same thing.

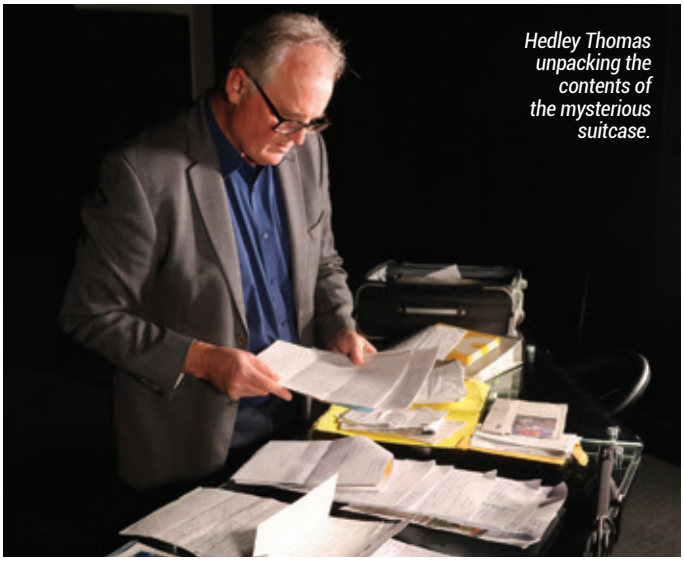
Motherhood has also changed my perspective as a family lawyer. I understood the importance of parenting matters before having Sunday, of course, but becoming a parent gives you another appreciation for just how deeply people feel about decisions involving their children.

I am fortunate to have great people around me both personally and professionally. There are definitely days where everything doesn't fit neatly into place, but I think I have become much better at accepting that balance can look different from one week to the next.

■ *Visit richardson-murray.law for a family law firm you can trust.*

the suitcase that unlocked A MURDER MYSTERY

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **supplied**



Hedley Thomas unpacking the contents of the mysterious suitcase.

Four years ago, a padlocked suitcase arrived unannounced for award-winning journalist Hedley Thomas – inside lay decades of cold-case evidence and the catalyst for his new investigation.



Rex Bakes



Hedley Thomas

Four years ago, a heavy, padlocked suitcase arrived unannounced for award-winning journalist Hedley Thomas. Inside lay years of cold-case evidence and the catalyst for his new investigation.

The heavy, padlocked suitcase arrived unannounced at The Australian's Brisbane office, addressed to Hedley Thomas, the journalist behind a string of chart-topping investigative podcast series including *The Teacher's Pet*.

A colleague, wary of the unexpected parcel, texted Hedley, who had recently finished covering the trial of Chris Dawson, who was convicted for the murder of his wife Lyn Dawson, whose unexplained disappearance was the subject of award-winning *The Teacher's Pet* series.

"So turns out this suitcase has a padlock on it, and it's taped up. And then there's a separate envelope on my desk. There's a key inside the envelope, and the key is meant to go into the lock on the suitcase, and they were mailed on different days," Hedley recounted.

Inside was the life's work of a retired private investigator named Rex Bakes, sent from a regional South Australian town with nothing more than a hope that Hedley might take an interest.

Rex was originally hired by the defence team of a man named Ray McQueen, who had been charged with the 1986 murder of his 30-year-old wife Rosslyn McQueen but never faced trial.

Unsettled by some of his discoveries, Rex started a decades-long quest for justice.

Over the decades that followed, working the case alone and unpaid, Rex came to know a lot more about the case. As he got older, he wanted "fresh eyes" and someone to pick up where he had left off. Having watched Hedley report on the conviction of Chris Dawson, Rex decided to take a chance on the investigative journalist.

That unexpected package became the foundation for *The Poisoned Wife*, Hedley's newest investigative podcast and his first set in Victoria.


THE
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The 1986 case is a confronting one: in the small rural community of Lockwood near Bendigo, Victoria, a young mother named Rosslyn McQueen, five and a half months pregnant and with a toddler in the house, died an agonising death from a massive dose of strychnine. It took 12 weeks for a laboratory to confirm the cause, with no initial crime scene established. Her husband, Ray McQueen, was charged with his wife's murder and a coroner found he had murdered Rosslyn by unlawfully and maliciously administering strychnine. A Supreme Court trial was abandoned when key evidence was ruled inadmissible. Ray has always denied involvement in his wife's murder.

In eerily similar lines to *The Teacher's Pet*, at the centre of the case, alongside Ros and Ray, is a former babysitter, just 16 years old in 1986.

"I interviewed that woman who's now in her mid-50s and she's incredibly brave," Hedley says, describing the interview as one of the most remarkable in a career built on getting people to open up.

"She was vulnerable back then. She made no secret when the police interviewed her of the fact that she was in love with Ray McQueen ... she was a very young person when the police converged on Bendigo."

> **"I interviewed that woman who's now in her mid-50s and she's incredibly brave. — *Hedley Thomas***

Why would a total stranger trust Thomas with a lifetime of evidence? The answer lies in decades of relentless journalism built from the ground up.

Hedley started at the Gold Coast Bulletin in 1984 as a copy boy during the final era of newsroom typewriters. A cadetship at Brisbane's The Courier-Mail followed, taking him overseas by age 22 to cover pivotal moments like the fall of the East Berlin Wall and the Romanian Revolution. That sink-or-swim foreign reporting taught him to chase stories with persistence.

Across eight major series and nearly 170 million downloads worldwide, he has earned eight Walkley Awards and a global reputation. His landmark podcasts include *The Teacher's Pet*, which helped lead to the conviction of Chris Dawson four decades after Lynette Dawson's disappearance, and *Shandee's Story*, which exposed systemic flaws in Queensland's DNA laboratory. That track record is why people sit on information for decades until he gives them a reason to come forward.

Despite his international reach, Hedley remains grounded in his roots. Living in Brisbane, he is now a co-owner of the Gold Coast Titans alongside figures like NRL legend Matty Johns.

He has three sisters, one of them is Rebecca Frizelle, a Main Beach local and the majority owner of the Gold Coast Titans along with her husband Brett. Rebecca is still awaiting a voice acting role in one of her brother's podcasts.

"Any day now," said Hedley.

■ ***The Poisoned Wife is available at thepoisonedwife.com.au***



Hedley Thomas, Rex Bakes and Karina Berger working together in Bendigo.

> “So turns out this suitcase has a padlock on it, and it's taped up... there's a key inside the envelope, and the key is meant to go into the lock on the suitcase, and they were mailed on different days.”
> *— Hedley Thomas*

Private investigator Rex Bakes, originally hired by the defence team of Ray McQueen, who had been charged with the 1986 murder of his wife.

For three decades, a nightly bulletin has chronicled the triumphs, challenges and extraordinary growth of the Gold Coast — becoming a trusted, familiar presence in homes across the city.

Celebrating 30 Years of 9 GOLD COAST NEWS

Words: **Lucy Charles** Photography: **supplied by Channel 9**





The Block 2026 contestants: Courtney & Sev, Chantel & Wyatt.



Rod Power, Luke Bradnam, Paul Taylor, Kylie Blucher, Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate, Eva Milic & Brendan Hockings.

> *There remains something uniquely valuable about stories produced for and about the community on your doorstep.*

In a media landscape that is constantly shifting, achieving longevity is a rare feat. Yet, for three decades, one constant has remained for residents of the Gold Coast: a dedicated nightly broadcast that has served as a trusted voice for the community.

This year, 9 Gold Coast News celebrates an extraordinary milestone: 30 years of local reporting and storytelling.

Since its inaugural bulletin on January 22, 1996, 9 Gold Coast News has chronicled the triumphs, challenges and extraordinary growth of the Gold Coast. From breaking news and major events to stories of everyday people, 9 Gold Coast News has reflected the character and changing face of the region.

The journey began in the mid-1990s, fronted by the late, great Rob Readings, who helped establish the standard for what a local news bulletin could be: warm, professional and deeply connected to the people it served.

The station recently marked the milestone with a special 30th-anniversary program on Channel 9 and 9Now, taking viewers on a nostalgic trip through three decades of Gold Coast news. Featuring highlights from the very first bulletin in 1996, memorable stories and familiar faces from the past, the special was a great reminder of just how much the city has changed over 30 years.

Among the highlights was a catch-up with the first person interviewed on the inaugural bulletin, revisiting a story that made headlines across the Gold Coast three decades ago.

The bulletin has also played an important role in nurturing television talent, providing a training ground for some of the biggest names in Australian broadcasting. Today, that legacy continues with a team deeply embedded in the Gold Coast community, including presenters Eva Milic and Paul Taylor, weather presenter Luke Bradnam and sports presenter Bronte Gildea.

For thousands of viewers, their familiar faces have become part of the nightly rhythm of life on the Coast, welcomed into homes each weeknight at 5.30pm.

9 Gold Coast News held their 30th-anniversary celebrations at The Star Gold Coast on August 6, 2026. With Nine Queensland leadership, local government representatives including Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate, industry figures and loyal viewers in attendance, the evening highlighted the significant role 9 Gold Coast News has played in documenting the city's extraordinary journey.

As the Gold Coast continues its rapid transformation towards a population of one million, the importance of local journalism has never been greater. In an increasingly fragmented media environment, where audiences can access news from anywhere in the world at any time, there remains something uniquely valuable about stories produced for and about the community on your doorstep. For generations of Gold Coast residents, it has been part of the daily ritual of life on the Coast, a familiar presence through times of celebration, tragedy, change and growth.

Reflecting on the past three decades, it is clear that 9 Gold Coast News has achieved something increasingly rare in modern media. As the team looks towards the next chapter, it does so with the confidence of a legacy built over 30 years of hard work, integrity, journalism and an unwavering belief in the Gold Coast community.

IT'S TIME FOR *a new planning SCHEME*



Deputy Mayor Cr Mark Hammel makes the case for scrapping the 50 per cent height uplift test — and why getting the balance right will define the next chapter of the Gold Coast.

Words: **Cr Mark Hammel, Deputy Mayor of the City of Gold Coast and Chair of the Planning and Regulation Committee**
Photography: **supplied**

There is one question that sits at the heart of almost every conversation I have about the Gold Coast's future: how do we get the balance right?

How do we accommodate growth and provide homes for our children and grandchildren, while investing in the infrastructure, jobs and economy a growing city needs — without losing the lifestyle, environment and character that make the Gold Coast such an extraordinary place to live?

For me, that is the challenge — and the opportunity — of the New Planning Scheme now being developed for our city. The Gold Coast is changing. Our population is growing, our economy is becoming more diverse and the way people want to live, work and invest here is evolving.

We are planning for a city of more than one million people in the 2040s.

The question is not whether the Gold Coast will grow. It will. The question is how we choose to grow.

Certainty matters to Gold Coasters — especially around height

Few planning issues generate as much debate as building height.

Through the extensive community consultation Council has undertaken for the Local Growth Management Strategy, one message has been particularly clear: Gold Coasters are not opposed to growth. They understand that a successful city changes over time.

What people want is certainty.

They want to know where growth will occur, what it will look like and how it will affect the neighbourhoods they live in.

For residents, that means having a clearer understanding of what the planning rules mean for their street, suburb and skyline.

For the property industry, it means something equally important: confidence. Developers, investors, architects and planners need a planning system that provides a clear framework for what can be built and where. Greater certainty means better-informed investment decisions, projects that are more capable of being delivered and, ultimately, more homes.

That is particularly important at a time when Australia is facing a significant housing challenge.

In my view, the 50 per cent uplift needs to go

This is one example of where I believe we have an opportunity to reset the way we plan for the Gold Coast's future.

In my opinion, the 50 per cent height uplift test in the current City Plan should be removed as part of the New Planning Scheme.

What should replace it is still very much a matter for Councillors to debate and determine. That discussion has been, and will continue to be, informed by consultation with the community and industry, who have had opportunities to provide their



Cr Mark Hammel, Deputy Mayor of the City of Gold Coast and Chair of the Planning and Regulation Committee

views throughout the process to date.

When the current City Plan was introduced in 2016, the uplift test was created with good intentions. It provided flexibility for additional height where a development could demonstrate that the additional height was appropriate against a range of criteria.

The problem is that many of those criteria involve interpretation and professional judgement.

Reasonable and experienced people can look at the same proposal and reach different conclusions about character, amenity, skyline, built form or design.

That can mean different conclusions between applicants and Council officers, between different experts, and — in the situation where a matter ultimately reaches the Planning and Environment Court — between the parties and the court.

The consequence is uncertainty. Uncertainty for residents about what may ultimately be built. Uncertainty for developers about what they can reasonably propose.

And uncertainty for Council officers and elected representatives responsible for making decisions.

Importantly, this is not simply a debate about high-rise towers on the beachfront — although those proposals understandably attract the greatest attention, especially in the media and on social media.

The current uplift provisions can also affect lower-scale developments in places such as Pimpama, Coomera, Ashmore and Benowa. In some circumstances, the provisions can even be relevant to homeowners looking to add a partial third storey to their property.

That tells me this is not simply a debate about skyscrapers. It is a debate about whether our planning system is giving the community and the property industry the certainty they deserve.

A city that has moved on

Take a look around and I think most people would agree: for the type of city we are, the current City Plan has served the Gold Coast well.

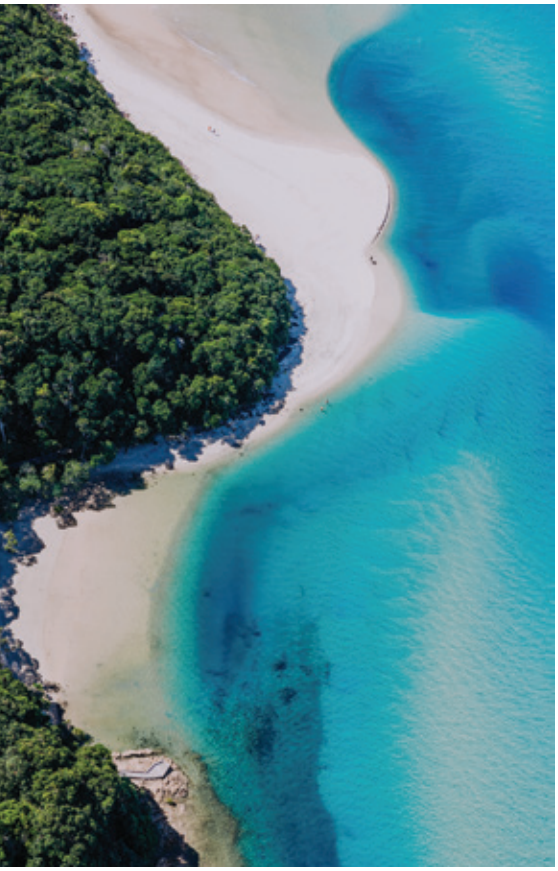
But the Gold Coast of 2026 is a very different city from the one we were planning for a decade ago.

Our population has grown. Our economy has evolved. New industries have emerged. Transport priorities have changed. Housing affordability has become a much more significant challenge. And our understanding of how a modern, liveable city should grow has changed with it.

I believe it is always appropriate to ask a bigger question: is the planning framework we have today the right framework for the Gold Coast we are becoming?

I don't believe we should simply keep patching and modifying a system designed for a different era.

We have an opportunity to build something better.



That opportunity is the New Planning Scheme.

Making it clearer when the answer is yes — and when it is no

Removing the 50 per cent uplift test should not be interpreted as a vote for more height.

In my view, it is about something much more fundamental: being clearer about where additional height is appropriate in the first place.

If a city centre, town centre or location around major public transport and infrastructure is appropriate for greater height and more homes, then let's identify that through the New Planning Scheme.

Let's plan for it properly.

Let's make the expectations clear to residents, developers and investors.

And let's make sure the infrastructure, transport connections, public spaces, block size, setbacks, landscaping and built form are planned alongside that growth.

In other words, let's make it clearer when the city can say yes.

The same principle should apply in areas where additional height is not appropriate.

If a neighbourhood has a lower-scale character that the community values and Council wants to protect, the planning scheme should make that intention clear too.

Let's make it easier for the city to say no to additional height in the wrong locations — and establish a sufficiently clear planning framework to support those decisions if they are challenged.

> "We cannot — and should not — stop the Gold Coast from growing. But we can choose how we grow."
>
> *Cr Mark Hammel, Deputy Mayor*

We will never eliminate planning appeals.

But clearer rules should mean fewer disputes, greater confidence and less time and ratepayer money spent defending decisions that are ultimately rooted in subjective interpretations of an unclear framework.

Growth where it makes sense

The Gold Coast has a unique opportunity in front of us.

We don't have to choose between growth and lifestyle.

We can have both. But we need to be deliberate about where and how we accommodate growth.

That means more homes in locations that already have the infrastructure and services to support them.

It means supporting greater housing diversity, including more opportunities for people to live close to where they work — and making it easier for purpose-built accommodation to be delivered in the right locations for students, retirees and key workers, including nurses, teachers, police, hospitality workers and the many others who keep our city running.

It means directing growth towards appropriate transport corridors and centres rather than continuing to push development further into our natural and rural landscapes, which will require rate and tax payers to pick up a huge infrastructure bill, and inevitably play catch up on infrastructure for decades to come. And it means protecting the neighbourhoods, open spaces, coastline, hinterland and environment that make the Gold Coast what it is.

For a city like ours, good planning is not about stopping change.

It is about making sure change happens in the right places and in the right way.

This is not community versus industry

One of the things I am most conscious of as Planning Chair is the tendency to turn planning debates into opposing camps.

Community versus industry.

Residents versus developers.

Growth versus lifestyle.

I don't think any of those are particularly helpful ways to frame the future of the Gold Coast. The reality is that we need each other.

We need a strong property and construction industry creating homes, jobs and investment.

We need residents who are engaged in shaping the communities they live in. And we need a planning system that gives both sides confidence that the rules are clear, fair and capable of delivering good outcomes.

That is the balance I want the New Planning Scheme to achieve.

Planning for the Gold Coast we want to become

The Gold Coast has always been a city of ambition. Gold Coasters come here because of the lifestyle, but they stay because of the opportunity.







"The question is not whether the Gold Coast will grow. It will. The question is how we choose to grow." — Cr Mark Hammel, Deputy Mayor

Our challenge is to make sure future generations have access to both.

A place where our children can afford to live and build their lives — not be forced to move away from the city they love because they are priced out.

A city with the jobs, infrastructure, housing and investment needed to support a growing population.

A place where people can enjoy the coastline, hinterland, parks and open spaces that make this city special.

And a city where development is not simply something that happens to communities, but something that is thoughtfully planned as part of the future we want to create.

We cannot — and should not — stop the Gold Coast from growing.

But we can choose how we grow.

We can plan more deliberately.

We can provide greater certainty.

And we can be much clearer about where height and more people belong — and where they don't.

That, in my view, is how we get the balance right.

There is a rare opportunity in front of us to strike that balance — to protect and enhance everything we love about the Gold Coast, while planning with confidence for the city we are becoming.

I think that is what excites me most about the New Planning Scheme.

> "What people want is certainty."
>
> *Cr Mark Hammel, Deputy Mayor*

This is about more than planning for growth. It is about shaping the next chapter of the Gold Coast — making it the most exciting, liveable and successful chapter yet.

A city where our children and grandchildren can afford to live, work and build their lives. A city with the jobs, investment, infrastructure and opportunity to match its ambition. And a city where our beaches, hinterland, open spaces, character and extraordinary lifestyle are not simply protected, but made better.

We know the Gold Coast will continue to grow. Our responsibility is to make sure it grows well.

To protect what we love. To embrace what is possible. And to plan boldly for what comes next.



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70 Salerno St, Surfers Paradise Qld 4217

SIGNATURE
BY METRICON

MEDIAHUNT CELEBRATES 21 years as Gold Coast's Leading Media Strategists



"Know your craft. Tell the truth." – Steve Hunt



Estelle Hunt

Steve Hunt reflects on two decades of newsroom-forged experience — and offers a warning on how to spot the industry's "PRtenders".

Words: **Steve Hunt, Founder and CEO, Media Hunt**
Photography: **supplied**

MediaHunt recently turned 21. It was an amazing occasion and a great personal milestone for a small family business that consults to a myriad of local, national and international property clients.

We are an agency of choice. Media Hunt's current client workbook is in the tens of billions of dollars throughout Australia and New Zealand.

A couple of people asked me: "Most businesses don't last a year. What's your secret?"

I'll get to that shortly. But perhaps the best way to answer is to start at the beginning.

I started my journalism career in 1985, as a 16-year-old proofreader. I sat beside a little old lady checking copy before it went to the typesetters, who manually placed the words on a page. The objective was simple: no grammatical errors.

That is where the edit ends – that's now AI's job.

Fast-forward to today's dynamic and ever-changing media landscape and the job is very different. We customise, strategise, consider, craft and tailor campaigns using instinct built over decades in the media. Quite simply, it's in our DNA.

> IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A PR OR MEDIA SPECIALIST, I'D ADVISE USING SOMEONE WHO HAS WORKED IN A NEWSROOM.

Over the years, we've navigated through the old-school world of print journalism, the arrival of the fax machine, the internet, social media – some might call it anti-social media – and now AI.

Through all of those changes, one thing has remained constant: understanding and adapting to how the media actually works and how the media evolves, and helping our clients understand and manage these changes.

Which brings me to my first piece of advice.

If you're looking for a PR or media specialist, I'd advise using someone who has worked in a newsroom.



If a 'media specialist' has never been a journalist, how can they genuinely advise on what a newsroom wants, how journalists think, or what makes a story?

Delivery is what matters. Your brand deserves advice based on experience.

I worked in newsrooms for almost 20 years before starting a business to help other businesses understand the sometimes confusing and sometimes ominous ways of interacting with the Fourth Estate.

Trust me, there are plenty of pretenders in this industry. I call them *PRtenders*.

That's one reason I dislike the term PR. It's a generic label that puts genuine media specialists and inexperienced operators in the same box.

I've seen a junior PR operator, with no tertiary media or communications experience, take on a new role and describe themselves as a "PR and communication (sic) specialist". Oh, the hubris. Gotta love the youth of today.

These are the *PRtenders* to be wary of: people who have never worked in a newsroom, never studied communications and yet suddenly claim specialist status.

Titles are easy. Experience isn't.

MediaHunt is more engaged than ever, with my wife, Estelle and daughter Holly now by my side, along with a trusted team, some of whom I have known and worked with for more than three decades.

And with the property market adjusting to changing economic conditions, our role in helping clients navigate the property cycle – of which we have experienced many – is arguably more important than ever.

All members of our senior team have newsroom experience. Collectively, we've lived through some of the biggest changes in communications the world has ever seen.

We didn't just survive. We thrived.

MediaHunt is regarded as one of the top-tier property media companies in the country. Don't take my word for it. Check it out for yourself.

It's not a boast; it's a reality built on two decades of relentless and continuous results and delivery.

We don't attach a fancy title to the bottom of an email because it sounds good. We don't claim to be media specialists because it suits us – we call ourselves media specialists because we are. And we have the track record to prove it.

We still have a beer with local journalists. We know what constitutes a story. We love the yarn. Most importantly, the media see us as a genuine source of news content and information.

Why? *Because we give them news, not fluff.*

Our current client portfolio represents tens of billions of dollars in property interests on the Gold Coast alone.

That isn't an accident. It includes international companies investing in Australia and interstate developers with decades of experience who choose to work with people they know, trust and know can and will deliver.

Many of them travelled from across the country to celebrate our 21st birthday with us.

That means something. They made MediaHunt matter because Media Hunt matters to them to manage their media needs.

Media isn't something you manage from a distance. You need to understand it. You need to respect it. And, sometimes, you need to have the courage to tell a client what they don't want to hear.

Media Hunt's 21st birthday marks the next phase in our family business's metamorphosis, and I couldn't be more excited.

The loyalty of trusted friends and lieutenants such as our television media specialist and former broadcast journalist Sean Lawson, and Nick Nichols, one of Queensland's finest business journalists of the past 40 years, has endured decades of cycles and challenges.

Our collaboration is strengthened by something that can't be bought: enduring relationships built on loyalty, honesty, trust and integrity.

And that, ultimately, is the answer to the question I was asked at the beginning.

How do you survive 21 years?

Know your craft. Tell the truth. Do what you say you will do. Surround yourself with good people. And never stop understanding the people who matter most to your business – your clients.

My advice to any business looking for media advice is simple: *Beware the PRtenders.*

Place yourself in the hands of those who know how to deliver.



The Gold Coast is no longer just a lifestyle destination *IT'S THE PLACE TO BE*

Migration data, record prestige sales and a wave of interstate and international buyers confirm what agents on the ground already know: the market has shifted, and the Gold Coast is where people are choosing to build their future.

Compiled by: **Amir Mian, Founder and Principal, Amir Prestige**

There is plenty of noise surrounding the property market, but the activity we are seeing on the ground tells a very clear story: buyers are buying, sellers are meeting the market and contracts are being signed.

The Gold Coast remains one of the most desirable property markets in Australia.

We continue to see strong interest from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, alongside returning expatriates and international buyers from New Zealand, Asia and Dubai. These purchasers are not simply searching for holiday homes. They are relocating their families, establishing businesses, investing for the future and making the Gold Coast their permanent home.

The official figures reinforce what we are experiencing.

Queensland recorded a net interstate migration gain of 16,528 people during the year ending December 2025. Over the same period, New South Wales recorded a net loss of 21,465 people.

Queensland also welcomed more than 105,000 overseas arrivals, contributing to net overseas migration of 54,604 people.

The movement away from the southern capitals is equally significant. During 2024-25, Sydney recorded a net internal migration loss of 33,282 people, while Melbourne lost 8,554. Brisbane and Perth were the only capital cities to record net internal migration gains.

These figures reflect a broader shift in the way people want to live.

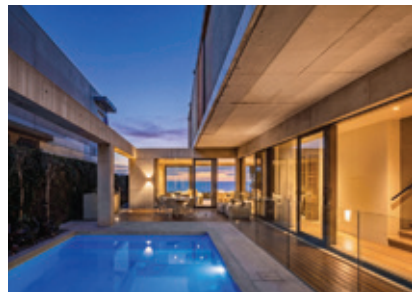
The Gold Coast offers the climate, coastline, lifestyle and connectivity people have always loved, but it now also provides the infrastructure, education, healthcare, business opportunities and international accessibility expected of a major city.

People are no longer moving here to slow down. They are moving here to build their future.

This demand is being felt across every price point. We are







speaking with families seeking quality homes, investors looking for long-term growth, downsizers wanting luxury apartments, interstate buyers pursuing waterfront living and international purchasers searching for premium residences and substantial landholdings.

Importantly, buyers have not disappeared – they have become more considered.

They are taking the time to assess value, compare opportunities and complete their due diligence.

They understand the market, and they will not overpay for a property that has been poorly presented or incorrectly positioned. However, when the right property is supported by the right marketing, strategy and pricing, competition remains strong.

At the prestige end, quality and scarcity continue to drive decision-making. Buyers understand there is only a finite supply of absolute beachfront property, wide-waterfront land, luxury penthouses and significant acreage close to the coast.

When one of these opportunities becomes available, the strongest buyers are prepared to act.At Amir Prestige, we sold more than $550 million worth of property during the first half of 2026, including two exceptional properties that each sold for more than $21 million.

Across our current Grand Spring Auction campaigns, more than two million views have already been generated, over 500 qualified buyers have engaged and more than 500 people have attended open homes.

That is not a market without buyers.

It is a market in which buyers expect value, sellers must listen to feedback and experienced negotiation matters more than ever.

We are now seeing sellers adjust their expectations and meet the market. That alignment is creating momentum. Properties are selling, negotiations are progressing and buyers who have been watching from the sidelines are moving forward when the right opportunity appears.

The Gold Coast's fundamentals remain exceptionally strong: continued population growth, limited quality stock, major infrastructure investment, international recognition and a lifestyle few locations can genuinely match.

There will always be economic headlines, interest-rate speculation and periods of uncertainty. But people will continue to move to places where they can build better lives – and the Gold Coast remains firmly at the top of that list.

The message from the market is clear: the buyers are here, sellers are meeting them, and the Gold Coast is the place to be.









127 HEDGES AVENUE, MERMAID BEACH

amir prestige

6 3 4 607m²*

ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE WITH 15M* ABSOLUTE BEACHFRONT

Defined by scale, privacy and absolute beachfront prestige, this landmark residence occupies 607m²* with 15 metres* of beach frontage. Featuring 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and parking for 4 vehicles, it offers a private courtyard, resort-style pool, walled gardens and uninterrupted Pacific views – all just minutes from the Gold Coast's finest lifestyle precincts such as Pacific Fair, Nobby Beach and Burleigh Heads.

Disclaimer *= approx.

GRAND SPRING AUCTION
Friday 2nd October, 11am at the Langham Hotel

AMIR MIAN 0401 470 499
amir@amirprestige.com.au







1701/58 THE ESPLANADE, BURLEIGH HEADS

3 4 2 288m²*

THE ADDRESS IS MONDRIAN. THE VIEW IS BURLEIGH.

Skyhome 1701 at Mondrian Residences is a 288m²* north-east corner residence above Burleigh Beach. Floor-to-ceiling glass frames sweeping ocean, headland, skyline and hinterland views. Three ensuited bedrooms, expansive living, a Gaggenau-appointed kitchen, butler's pantry and beachfront balcony combine with concierge, valet, private pool, wellness facilities, room service and secure parking.

Disclaimer *= approx.

amir prestige

GRAND SPRING AUCTION
Friday 2nd October, 11am at the Langham Hotel

AMIR MIAN 0401 470 499
amir@amirprestige.com.au

OMAR MIAN 0428 553 883
omar@amirprestige.com.au

SEAN WEILL 0432 749 677
sean@amirprestige.com.au







3201/9 NORTHCLIFFE TERRACE, SURFERS PARADISE

amir prestige

4 4 3 349m²*

A FRONT-ROW SEAT TO THE GOLD COAST

Residence 3201 at Royale commands a prized northern position above Northcliffe Beach, capturing sweeping ocean, coastline, skyline and hinterland views. Floor-to-ceiling glass fills expansive interiors with natural light, flowing to an all-weather beachfront terrace. Four ensuited bedrooms, Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances, three car spaces and six-star amenities complete this exceptional residence.

Disclaimer *= approx.

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Friday 2nd October, 11am at the Langham Hotel

OMAR MIAN 0428 553 883
omar@amirprestige.com.au

SEAN WEILL 0432 749 677
sean@amirprestige.com.au







31 HAMPTON COURT, SOVEREIGN ISLANDS

amir prestige

5 7 10 700m²*

FOR SALE
$5,950,000

PRESTIGIOUS SOVEREIGN ISLANDS WATERFRONT LIVING

This architect-designed Sovereign Islands residence commands approximately 28m* of protected north-to-wide-water frontage, with bridge-free Broadwater and ocean access. Marble finishes, French Oak floors, Swarovski chandeliers and Miele appliances enrich interiors. Five ensuited bedrooms, leisure spaces, a 3,000-bottle* cellar, lift, pool, mooring and basement parking complete the waterfront estate.

Disclaimer *= approx.

AMIR MIAN 0401 470 499
amir@amirprestige.com.au

JEANETTE SCHMIDT 0418 665 277
jeanette@amirprestige.com.au

ZEE KHALIQ 0466 251 107
zee@amirprestige.com.au







461 NEWRYBAR SWAMP ROAD, NEWRYBAR, NSW

amir prestige

2 1 1 105 Acres*

A PRIVATE 105 ACRE* HINTERLAND HOLDING WITH PANORAMIC VIEWS

Across 105 acres* of Byron Hinterland countryside, this holding captures panoramic views from Lennox Head to Broken Head, just nine minutes* from Seven Mile Beach. Featuring 8,050* macadamia trees, a spring-fed dam with private island and a stylish off-grid two-bedroom residence, it offers outstanding lifestyle, agricultural and future development potential within a spectacular natural setting.

Disclaimer *= approx.

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Friday 2nd October, 11am at the Langham Hotel

AMIR MIAN 0401 470 499
amir@amirprestige.com.au

MARK RONAN 0432 052 315
mark.r@amirprestige.com.au

CHARLES MILBURN 0412 257 057
charles@amirprestige.com.au







329 MONACO STREET, BROADBEACH WATERS

amir prestige

5 4 6 1585m²*

RARE ARCHITECTURAL ICON ON MAIN RIVER

Occupying a 1,585m²* allotment with 42.4m* of Main River frontage, this landmark residence combines bold architecture with extraordinary scale. An 848m²* floorplan features five bedrooms, soaring 10.8m* ceilings, grand entertaining zones and an ILVE-appointed kitchen. A resort-style pool, wraparound terrace, private boating facilities and six-car basement complete this exceptional waterfront estate with outstanding future potential.

Disclaimer *= approx.

GRAND SPRING AUCTION
Friday 2nd October, 11am at the Langham Hotel

ALEX & VICTORIA FLERI 0424 404 063
alexvictoria@amirprestige.com.au

AMIR MIAN 0401 470 499
amir@amirprestige.com.au







39 BRITANNIA AVENUE, BROADBEACH

amir prestige PROJECTS

JUST FIVE RESIDENCES. ONE EXTRAORDINARY PLACE TO CALL HOME.
BROADBEACH'S FIRST PENTHOUSE-QUALITY VILLAS.

Monarch 1 presents an exclusive corner villa combining house-like scale with penthouse-quality finishes in the heart of Broadbeach. Spanning approximately 325m²* across five levels, it features three bedrooms, four bathrooms, a powder room, private lift and separate media lounge. A sculptural stone kitchen with Gaggenau appliances, an entire 70m²* master retreat and a private rooftop create exceptional spaces for living and entertaining, complemented by secure side-by-side parking for two vehicles.

Disclaimer *= approx.

Estimated Completion Q1 2027.

SEAN WEILL 0432 749 677
sean@amirprestige.com.au

OMAR MIAN 0428 553 883
omar@amirprestige.com.au







9-11 TWENTY FOURTH AVENUE, PALM BEACH

amir prestige PROJECTS

OCEAN SEVEN PALM BEACH - ALL 4-BED CORNER VILLAS SOLD.
LIMITED 3-BED VILLAS REMAIN.

Ocean Seven presents a boutique collection of seven architecturally designed Palm Beach villas, approximately 200 metres* from the sand. Spanning 237m²* across four levels, each residence features three ensuited bedrooms, flexible multipurpose and living zones, a private lift, double garage, landscaped courtyard and rooftop terrace. Full concrete construction, floor-to-ceiling glazing, refined finishes and seamless indoor-outdoor flow deliver house-like scale with low-maintenance convenience, strong rental potential and outstanding coastal lifestyle appeal.

Disclaimer *= approx.

Outer Structure Now Complete - On Track For Completion Soon.

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sean@amirprestige.com.au

OMAR MIAN 0428 553 883
omar@amirprestige.com.au

BUILDING BEYOND THE BOOM

Why Homecorp is betting on the Gold Coast's next chapter

As construction begins on the $360 million Lýon Residences at Budds Beach, Homecorp CEO Ron Bakir explains why long-term thinking, not short-term demand, is shaping the Gold Coast's next generation of homes.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **Supplied by Homecorp**



Homecorp's Lýon Residences in Budds Beach has commenced construction

The Gold Coast has long been a market defined by momentum. As Australia's property sector evolves alongside changing buyer expectations and a more considered approach to purchasing, the next chapter of the city's growth will be defined by more than demand alone.

For leading Australian developer Homecorp, that next chapter is already taking shape.

The company has marked its next major move on the Gold Coast, commencing construction on its $360 million Lýon Residences on the fringe of Budds Beach. Rising 32 storeys above 8-10 Acacia Avenue and 25-27 Oak Avenue, the project will deliver 178 two- and three-bedroom residences, adding to Homecorp's growing multi-storey pipeline across the city.

For Homecorp CEO and Founder Ron Bakir, the decision to continue investing in the Gold Coast reflects a longer-term view of a market that has continued to demonstrate its strength through changing economic conditions.

"The Gold Coast has evolved enormously, but what continues to underpin this market is that people genuinely want to live here," Mr Bakir said.

"Population growth, infrastructure investment and the lifestyle proposition continue to create demand, but the market is also becoming more sophisticated. Buyers are looking much further beyond the apartment itself and asking what a property will give them over the long term.

"That is why we continue to have confidence in the Gold Coast and Southeast Queensland. We are not looking at where the market is today in isolation. We are looking at where it is heading and what people will expect from their homes five, 10 and 20 years from now."

That question will become increasingly important as Australia's property market moves into 2027.

Population growth, changing household structures and evolving lifestyles are reshaping the way Australians think about property. While location, quality and affordability will remain fundamental, buyers are



Rising 32 storeys, Lýon will deliver 178 residences



Lobby entrance

increasingly looking at adaptability, connectivity, wellbeing and the value a home can provide throughout different stages of life.

How Australians live is also changing, creating new considerations for the homes and communities that will be needed in the decades ahead. Australian Bureau of Statistics projections show the number of households nationally could increase from 10 million in 2021 to between 13.3 million and 13.9 million by 2046. Over the same period, the number of Australians living alone is projected to increase from 2.6 million to between 3.4 million and four million, pointing to growing demand not only for more housing, but for greater diversity in how homes are designed and how communities support connection.

On the Gold Coast, growth is expected to be particularly pronounced, with Queensland Government projections pointing to the city's population surpassing one million by 2046.

For developers, Mr Bakir believes these shifts present an opportunity to think further ahead.

"The next phase of the property market will be shaped by buyers who expect more from where they live," he said.

"Buyers have access to more information than ever before and they are looking closely at what they are getting from a property. They want confidence in the developer, confidence in the location and confidence that the home they choose will continue to work for them as their life changes.

"That means thinking beyond the traditional measures of an apartment. How adaptable is it? How does it support your health? Where do you connect with other people? Can you work from home comfortably? Does the building make everyday life easier? These are increasingly becoming part of the value equation."

For developers, these shifts will require a deeper understanding of how people use their homes, from the spaces they retreat to, to those that encourage connection, movement and interaction. The opportunity will be to create residences that respond to different stages of life, while continuing to add value to the way people live every day.

That longer-term thinking is also changing the meaning of longevity in residential property. Today, it is not simply about how long a building will stand, but how well a home can continue to support the people who live within it as their lives, needs and priorities evolve.

"The question for developers is no longer simply what buyers want right now. We have to anticipate how people will live in the decades ahead and create environments that can continue supporting them as their lifestyles and priorities change," he said.

"A great home should make everyday life better. It should give you places to connect, places to switch off, opportunities to look after your health and spaces that can evolve with you. That is what longevity in property should really mean."

That thinking sits at the centre of Homecorp's next generation of Gold Coast projects.

At Lýon Residences, wellness has been integrated throughout the project, including a Moroccan spa-inspired retreat with private treatment rooms, Nordic sauna and steam room, hot and cold plunge pools and a soaking pool. Above, a rooftop infinity pool and spa, fitness centre, residents' lounge and entertaining spaces have been designed around opportunities to exercise, restore and connect.

Just kilometres south, construction is also advancing on Homecorp's Florence Residences in Surfers Paradise. The 26-storey project will deliver 120 residences, with wellness and connection similarly embedded throughout its design and amenity offering.

Together, the projects represent more than Homecorp's continued investment in the Gold Coast. They reflect where the developer believes residential property is heading next.

"The Gold Coast will continue to grow and there will continue to be a need for more homes, but our responsibility is to think beyond simply adding supply," Mr Bakir said.

"What we build today will form part of this city for decades. The opportunity is to create homes that are ready for the way people will want to live tomorrow."

■ ***Visit www.homecorp.com for more.***



Metricon's flagship Catalina display home in Surfers Paradise

Beyond the surface: *how great design* CREATES DISTINCTION

THE SECRET TO A HOME THAT FEELS AS GOOD AS IT LOOKS.

It's easy to fall in love with a beautiful home. The standout features and memorable design moments that catch our eye often shape our impression, making it easy to think that's what good design is all about.

But the real test of good design is how well a home supports the way you live.

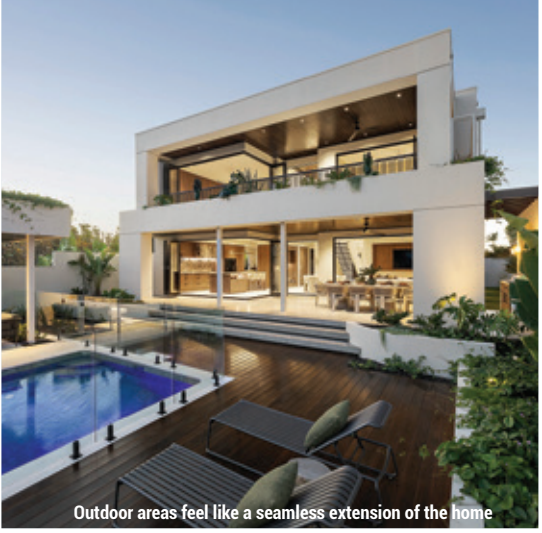
While premium finishes certainly do play an important role, a really well-designed home goes beyond the surface. It considers how spaces connect, how natural light moves through the home and how everyday living can be made easier and more enjoyable.

Metricon Design Director Adrian Popple says the homes that work best are those that strike a balance between timeless beauty and the effortless natural rhythm of daily life.

"Good design starts with one simple question – how will it feel to live here?" Adrian says.

"The best design decisions are often the ones that quietly enhance your everyday living. When what looks good is carefully combined with what feels good, a home becomes more than a showpiece.

"At Metricon, these principles are applied across every home, from designs created for first home buyers through to luxury residences, helping to make thoughtful, considered design accessible to Australians across a range of budgets."


Outdoor areas feel like a seamless extension of the home


Expansive kitchen island, a centrepiece for entertaining


Each zone flows naturally onto the next

IN THE FLOW

The way spaces connect is just as important as the spaces themselves. A smartly designed home should feel easy to move through, with each zone flowing naturally into the next.

It's one of the reasons open-plan living remains so popular. Bringing together cooking, dining, relaxing and entertaining in a central hub, creates a stronger sense of connection.

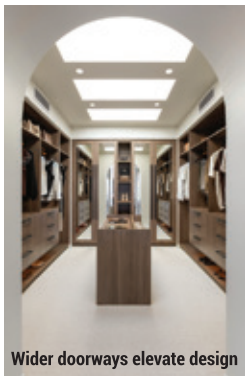
Large sliding or bifold glass doors in this space strengthen that connection, helping outdoor areas feel like a seamless extension of the home.

"When a floorplan works well, you'll hardly notice it. The whole home feels connected and comfortable," Adrian says.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Natural light is another important element. It can help set the mood, enhance wellbeing and make spaces feel larger and brighter, or warm and intimate.

Beyond aesthetics, the most memorable homes are shaped by intelligent design. Statement voids allow natural light to flow throughout the home, creating a sense of volume, openness and grandeur, while carefully positioned windows celebrate views and strengthen the connection between living spaces and the outdoors.


Wider doorways elevate design

"The most successful homes are those where every design decision serves a purpose. Whether it's the interplay of light, the flow between spaces or the way a home captures its outlook, considered design has the power to elevate everyday living," says Adrian.

FORM AND FUNCTION

Proportion is one of the quiet achievers of good design. The right balance between room sizes, ceiling heights and transition spaces can have a dramatic impact on how a home feels.

Higher or raked ceilings in living areas, a statement void above an entryway, and generous transitions between spaces through wider hallways and doorways can elevate an already impressive floorplan.

Together, these considered elements create a greater sense of volume, light and presence, bringing an added layer of sophistication and refinement to the home.

DESIGNED FOR THE WAY YOU LIVE

Great design goes beyond practicality to anticipate the way people want to live. From expansive kitchen islands that become the centrepiece for entertaining, to generous dining spaces designed for gathering with family and friends, every space is created with purpose.

Dedicated studies support the growing need for working from home, while media rooms and retreat spaces offer a place to unwind. Private main bedroom suites, complete with a luxurious ensuite and walk-in robe, provide a resort-inspired sanctuary to begin and end each day.

"The best homes respond intuitively to the way people live," says Adrian. "Whether it's creating spaces for entertaining, working, relaxing or retreating, great design ensures every area of the home feels purposeful, connected and effortless to live in."

MATERIAL WORLD

Materials play a defining role in shaping a home's character, but exceptional design is about more than following trends. By staying closely connected to emerging influences, Metricon's Interior Design team continually looks ahead, interpreting what's next and translating it into homes that feel both contemporary and enduring.

The Catalina, a winner in the Best Display Home category at the 2026 Master Builders Queensland Gold Coast Housing and Construction Awards, is a powerful expression of design that goes beyond the surface. Showcasing generous proportions, natural light and seamless connections between spaces, it brings the principles of exceptional design to life.

"Great design is about creating homes that continue to inspire and perform long after they're built," says Adrian. "When every design decision has been carefully considered, the result is a home that feels as remarkable to live in as it is to look at."

The Catalina demonstrates that the best homes aren't defined by a single feature or trend, but by the way every element works together to create a truly luxe way of life. Because the best design isn't just seen, it's lived.

■ *For more information, visit www.metricon.com.au*



Odyssey Chevron Island is affordable opulence.

Redefining Aged Care, ONE PENTHOUSE *AT A TIME*

With luxury apartments, a dedicated dementia care wing and a resort-style wellness program, Odyssey Lifestyle Care Communities is proving that ageing well doesn't mean compromising on lifestyle.

Words: **Melinda Burton** Photography: **Odyssey Lifestyle Care Communities**

It would be fair to say that Odyssey Lifestyle Care Communities is successfully reshaping the aged care experience. With two communities open, located in Robina and Chevron Island, and two in development at Hope Island and Burleigh Waters, the Odyssey model comes with a unique offering and a long list of benefits rarely seen in the aged care space.

Blending the support of senior living with the indulgence of a five-star resort, Odyssey has introduced three new initiatives that are helping to create a brighter future for aging Australians. The Chevron Island penthouses, Memory Lane and a Fitness and Wellness program might sound like community highlights, but they are more than that. They reflect Odyssey's commitment to providing an exceptional lifestyle with high quality care while ensuring residents have the freedom to live with the luxury and independence they have worked hard for.

> This offering enables couples to continue living together when one or both partners can no longer safely live at home.

Odyssey has a long history of listening to the market and understanding what people want. From this, they have created an experience and an offering that is aspirational, accessible and unparalleled.

CHEVRON ISLAND PENTHOUSES

With luxury apartments starting at $840,000 and penthouses priced from $6.54 million to $9.35 million, Odyssey is affordable opulence. Located in the top three levels of Odyssey Chevron Island's 19 storey tower, the penthouses come with access to a full suite of premium services.

Odyssey founder Phil Usher says the penthouses were created in direct response to demand from Australians seeking more than the traditional aged care offering.

"Our focus has always been creating a better model for ageing Australians that gives the power back to residents and puts people first," says Mr Usher. "We know there's a market of people who don't want to compromise when they make the transition to aged care, they are seeking the same quality, lifestyle and amenities they've always enjoyed, and this offering is our response to that demand."

MEMORY LANE

Another Odyssey innovation is Memory Lane, a purpose built space to help remedy the challenges faced by those with mild to advanced cognitive impairments. Located on Level two, with sweeping views of Surfers Paradise, Memory Lane consists of 23 apartments, a 90-metre walking track, a lounge area with a fireplace, raised garden areas, a safety kitchen, specialised support and organised activities all within a secure and comfortable environment that resembles home.

"This is a true aging-in-place option that provides tailored services catering specifically for those living with dementia," says Mr Usher. "This offering enables couples to continue living together when one or both partners can no longer safely live at home and this can make an enormous difference as familiarity provides a sense of reassurance."

Memory Lane means that as a resident's dementia progresses, they will be looked after in an environment that prioritises safety and dignity.

FITNESS AND WELLNESS

Everything at Odyssey has been carefully curated to maximise daily independence and quality of life, with a story focus on enhancing care, which is where the Fitness and Wellness program comes in.

Equipped with a state-of-the-art gymnasium and a pool, Odyssey Chevron Island has created a program designed to support the health, mobility and overall wellbeing of residents. Facilitated by a Fitness and Wellbeing Trainer, the initiative offers individual and group exercise sessions, with the first session attracting a large portion of the community.

Apartments in Odyssey Chevron Island start at $840,000 and if you own your own home, whether in the Gold Coast or Brisbane areas, chances are you can enjoy life at Odyssey, which secures your care, community and lifestyle for the future. .

Visit odysseycommunities.com.au for more infomation.





> Our focus has always been creating a better model for ageing Australians that gives the power back to residents and puts people first.

MARÉA BREAKS Gold Coast Trend

WITH BOUTIQUE 25-RESIDENCE COLLECTION

Coolangatta's newest $70 million tower trades density for space, privacy and parkside views.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **supplied**



Construction has begun on Maréa, a $70 million boutique tower set to bring a fresh perspective to Coolangatta's transforming skyline. The development will offer a small number of exclusive residences to the burgeoning downsizer market, with completion expected in 2027.

The project brings together seasoned developers Marc Romano and Max Iacopetta, architect Jordan Pope of Impact Design and builder Ben Connolly of Cornerstone Constructions, to deliver what they say is an intimate collection of residences for like-minded buyers embracing the southern Gold Coast lifestyle.

Marea will feature only 25 generously proportioned three and four-bedroom residences and dual-storey penthouses, each designed for uncompromising privacy and exclusivity. The project is located at 27 Dixon Street, Coolangatta, Qld 4225.

"Marea has been carefully designed and tailored for those who already know the stunning lifestyle of the southern beaches but may not have had the quality of product commensurate with one of Australia's most iconic north facing beach locations," said Matt George, sales director for Urban Activation.

Mr George said developments on the coastal market tend to follow one logic: more units, smaller footprints, taller towers.

"Maréa breaks from it. Set on one of Gold Coast's most sought-after beachside stretches, the development holds to just 25 residences across 11 levels", he said.









> WE WANTED TO CREATE SOMETHING MORE INTIMATE AND DESIGN-FOCUSED THAN THE LARGER-SCALE COASTAL DEVELOPMENTS, WITH A GENUINE EMPHASIS ON CRAFTSMANSHIP, QUALITY AND LIVEABILITY.
>
> *— MARC ROMANO, DEVELOPER*

"Larger floorplans, privacy, and a built form that answers to its parkside setting rather than crowding it."

The relationship between the building and its setting is central to the design. Maréa is positioned with unrestricted views across Goodwin Park to the Pacific Ocean, while its landscaping, materials and architecture have been carefully considered to connect the residences with the surrounding landscape.

Maréa prioritises generous floorplans, private outdoor spaces and a strong connection to its parkside setting, with architecture and interiors shaped around the unrivalled experience of living by the coast.

"It is this combination of natural setting and everyday amenity that has informed Maréa's approach to coastal living – a home that provides access to the beach and the energy of the neighbourhood, while retaining a sense of space and privacy," said Mr George.

Developer Marc Romano says the project's scale was fundamental to the original concept.

"We wanted to create something more intimate and design-focused than the larger-scale coastal developments, with a genuine emphasis on craftsmanship, quality and liveability."

With its premium location, Maréa is positioned to capture the very best of Coolangatta's coastal lifestyle. Just steps from the world-class surf breaks of Snapper Rocks, Kirra, and Coolangatta Beach, this is a setting that draws ocean lovers and lifestyle seekers in equal measure. Here, a swim before work, a walk along the sand, or an afternoon spent in the water isn't something to plan for - it's simply at your doorstep.

The lifestyle extends well past the shoreline. A buzzing café culture, shopping, and direct access to Gold Coast Airport all sit within easy reach, making Coolangatta one of Southeast Queensland's most connected and liveable pockets – a suburb that carries itself quietly, despite offering far more than most.

At the top of the building, three dual-storey penthouses offer the most expansive residences within the collection. Each includes large entertaining areas, generous terraces and island kitchens, alongside a private pool and spa.

At rooftop level, two landscaped terraces, each with its own pool, provide shared spaces for residents to swim, relax and entertain, with elevated views across Coolangatta and towards the Pacific.

The interiors follow the same approach. Generous proportions, natural light and a muted material palette create spaces that feel calm and enduring. Master suites feature custom walk-in wardrobes and detailed ensuites, with some incorporating deep soaking baths positioned to capture the morning light.

For Maréa, the proposition is deliberately straightforward: fewer residences, more space and a stronger connection to the greenery, coastal charm and slower pace of living that define Coolangatta.

Three-bedroom residences are priced from $1.8 million to $3 million, while four-bedroom penthouses range from $5.05 million to $5.95 million.

Enquire now www.marearesidences.com.au
Georgia Miller 0433 952 422.



Brook Monahan,
Mosaic Founder and Managing Director

the story behind a $1.7 BILLION Vote of Confidence

In a market where confidence matters more than ever, a proven ability to deliver has become the property industry's most valuable currency.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **Supplied by Mosaic**



Sophia by Mosaic in Palm Beach, currently under construction

Artist Impression

In a market where confidence matters more than ever, a proven ability to deliver has become the property industry's most valuable currency.

Since 2018, Mosaic Property Group has delivered, or is in the process of delivering, more than $1.7 billion in luxury multi-residential development across the Gold Coast — 14 projects and 724 homes — helping define one of the most significant periods of growth in the region's history.

From Mermaid Beach, Broadbeach and Burleigh Heads to Palm Beach, Kirra and Bilinga, it has established one of the region's most prolific and consistent delivery track records.

In an era marked by rising construction costs, labour shortages and increasing complexity, Mosaic has continued to launch, sell and deliver luxury projects at scale, with sustained buyer demand driving strong pre-sales momentum and sell-outs well ahead of completion.

The obvious question is why. For Mosaic Founder and Managing Director Brook Monahan, the answer lies in an unrelenting pursuit of excellence and a commitment to constant evolution.

"We don't believe in a finish line. The moment you think you've mastered something is the moment you stop listening. Every customer, every project and every market cycle has something to teach us. We take those lessons, challenge ourselves to do better, and keep raising the benchmark."

Underlying that philosophy is a belief that luxury isn't a fixed idea — it must continually evolve to meet the way people want to live.

"Today, true luxury is about far more than aesthetics. It's about creating homes that feel effortless to live in — homes that support wellbeing, function intuitively and enrich everyday life."

"It's also about securing remarkable locations and designing for the way people aspire to live, both now and in the future. By continually researching emerging trends, behaviours and expectations and engaging closely with the thousands of buyers who have purchased from Mosaic previously, we ensure every project is designed not just for today, but for the way people aspire to live in the future. Our projects must be timeless in every sense."

"Today, true luxury is about far more than aesthetics. It's about creating homes that feel effortless to live in — homes that support wellbeing, function intuitively and enrich everyday life."

A key defining strength is Mosaic being both developer and builder, retaining oversight of every decision, detail, and home it delivers, and standing by its customers long after settlement.

Mosaic's evolution continues through four ultra-luxury addresses: Isabel in Burleigh Heads, which is nearing completion, and three currently under construction including Madeline in Broadbeach, Sophia in Palm Beach, and Josephine in Burleigh Heads.

"These residences are the clearest expression of our vision to date — homes that aim to feel instinctively right, where every detail has purpose, every space enhances wellbeing, and every day is shaped by the privilege of an exceptional location that is very difficult to replicate again," Mr Monahan said.

While these developments signal the next chapter of Mosaic's Gold Coast story, they are underpinned by more than a decade of proven performance across South East Queensland.

Since 2012, the company has completed more than 75 residential communities representing over $3 billion in value while maintaining a 100 per cent completion record.



Artist Impression *Josephine by Mosaic in Burleigh Heads*



Madeline by Mosaic in Broadbeach *Artist Impression*

"Purchasing off the plan requires an immense level of trust, something we never take for granted," Mr Monahan said.

"We're creating places where birthdays will be celebrated, children will grow up, friendships will be formed and memories will be made. That's a responsibility we feel deeply, and it influences every decision we make."

This inherent customer-first approach is a formula Mosaic appears to have gotten right, with repeat purchasers and referrals accounting for a substantial share of sales.

Market confidence is matched by industry recognition. Multiple Mosaic projects have received prestigious awards numbering in the hundreds, including Florence in Burleigh Heads, which was named Project of the Year at the 2026 UDIA Queensland Awards for Excellence.

"We have worked incredibly hard to build a brand people trust and every day we will fight hard to continue to earn that trust," Mr Monahan said.

"Whether someone purchased a Mosaic home 10 years ago or is considering one today, our commitment remains unchanged: to create homes that stand the test of time, honour the confidence people place in us, and leave a lasting sense of pride in those who call them home."

■ *Design-led luxury now selling on the Gold Coast, visit mosaicproperty.com.au for more information on all of the current developments by Mosaic.*

the EVELEIGH *LEADS the CHARGE* as Gold Coast apartment sales power through a resilient first half

Urbis data shows 644 new apartment sales across the Gold Coast in H1 2026, with Hirsch and Faigen's $240 million Broadbeach project out in front of the pack.



Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team**
Source: **Urbis, Gold Coast New Apartment Market Report, H1 2026**

The Eveleigh apartments maximise panaromic views.

The Gold Coast's new apartment market pushed through a wall of economic and policy noise in the first half of 2026, notching 644 sales — well up on the 576 recorded across the same period in 2025, according to fresh figures from property research firm Urbis.

The quarterly split tells a story of steady rather than spiking demand: 326 sales landed in the March quarter, followed by 318 in the June quarter, a result Urbis analysts read as evidence that buyers are largely shrugging off concerns tied to proposed changes to federal property tax settings.

No project captured more of that appetite than The Eveleigh, the $240 million Broadbeach development from Melbourne-based developer Hirsch and Faigen, which locked in 52 sales for the half — the strongest result of any single project on the coast.

It's the group's fourth Gold Coast apartment project in five years, and the outcome puts The Eveleigh at the front of a market that sales and marketing director Matthew George, of Urban Activation, says is being driven by genuine appetite for well-positioned, high-calibre residences.

> **Broadbeach sits at the cosmopolitan centre of the Gold Coast, and it's proving a genuine drawcard for interstate buyers backing one of the fastest-growing regions in the country.**
>
> ***– Matthew George, Urban Activation***

Brisbane-based Red & Co wasn't far behind, banking 35 sales at its $250 million COMO project in Varsity Lakes to lock in second place on the developer ladder. Sherpa Property Group and Aniko Group tied for third with 27 sales apiece in the June quarter — Sherpa's tally driven by a complete sell-out of all 51 apartments at its $67 million Flourish Oasis project in Palm Beach, ahead of a Q3 2027 completion. Siera rounded out the top five with 22 sales, underpinned by its Exhale Surfers Paradise project, due to complete in 2028.

Beyond the developer scoreboard, the Urbis figures point to a market with real depth. More than half of all June quarter sales — 58 per cent — were transacted in the central Gold Coast corridor, which also carries the largest pool of available stock. Prices moved sharply higher over the same period: the coast-wide weighted average sale price climbed to $2.634 million in Q2, up from $2.228 million in Q1. The southern beaches precinct held its position as the market's priciest pocket for a third consecutive quarter, averaging $4.874 million across 70 sales.

Supply shows no sign of easing to meet that demand. Eight new projects launched during the June quarter, adding to the 14 that came to market in Q1, and Urbis is now tracking 97 active projects across the Gold Coast — the highest number the firm has on record.

"Sustained sales, rising prices and a steady flow of new launches all point to a market holding its ground against broader economic and policy pressure," said Lynda Campbell, Senior Consultant at Urbis.

"Posting more than 300 sales in each of the first two quarters, in spite of the uncertainty around tax reform, tells us underlying demand hasn't gone anywhere."

Campbell added that the pattern reflects a buyer base focused on fundamentals rather than headlines: purchasers are backing quality, location and long-term appeal over short-term economic noise, rather than sitting on the sidelines.

For The Eveleigh specifically, the buyer pool has skewed toward two groups — Gold Coast downsizers looking to stay close to home, and interstate purchasers chasing a lifestyle change. George puts the project's pulling power down to its address as much as its design.

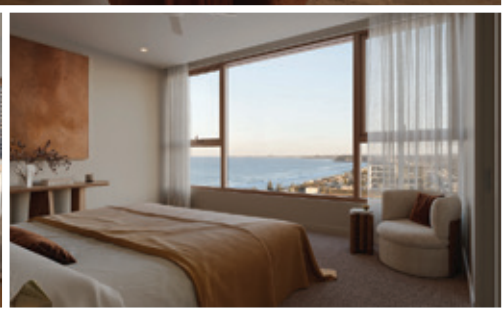
"Broadbeach sits at the cosmopolitan centre of the Gold Coast, and it's proving a genuine drawcard for interstate buyers backing one of the fastest-growing regions in the country," he said. "Hirsch and Faigen have built exactly what this market wants in central Broadbeach, and the sales numbers reflect the appetite for premium apartments close to the beach."

With first-half sales outpacing 2025, prices climbing and a record number of projects in the pipeline, the Gold Coast's apartment market looks set to carry its momentum well into the second half of the year.

For enquiries call 0420 102 079









The Eveleigh – well-positioned, high-calibre new apartment project.



Paradiso Place set to become the centrepiece of Surfers Paradise North

PARADISO PLACE
the $1.5 billion heart of Surfers

As Surfers North rises from vision to reality, SPG Land's triple-tower masterplan is redefining what position — not just size — means to Gold Coast downsizers.

Words: **Ocean Road Magazine Editorial Team** Photography: **Supplied by SPG Land**

The $1.5 billion Paradiso Place is leading the charge of the new Surfers Paradise precinct, Surfers North. The transformation of Surfers North is no longer a plan – it's live, and it's shaping up as one of the Gold Coast's largest ever transformative precincts.

Stretching from the northern end of Surfers Paradise towards Main Beach, this evolving precinct brings together some of the Gold Coast's most recognisable lifestyle, hospitality, development and construction names. From the established appeal of Budds Beach and the Marriott and QT hotels to major projects being delivered by leading players including Gurner, McNab and Meriton, the area is undergoing a significant transformation.

Paradiso Place is set to become the centrepiece of the Surfers Paradise North precinct, delivering the area's only integrated residential, premium food and beverage, retail and lifestyle destination. Built from the ground up, it will create a new amenity and lifestyle hub for the broader precinct, connecting the northern reaches of Surfers Paradise with the sophistication of Main Beach.

"The Paradiso Place site spans an entire city block and is the largest master-planned project to be developed on the Gold Coast this close to the beach," said Brad McMahon, Sales Director at SPG Land.

The proof is on-site. Construction is well underway at Paradiso Place, signalling a new chapter for this evolving stretch of Surfers Paradise. A major new residential destination is rising from the ground up, bringing residences, resort-style amenity, dining and retail together in one connected precinct.

Paradiso Place is being delivered by international developer SPG Land, which has already secured more than $100 million in sales. With construction now underway, the project is moving from vision to reality.

"Buyers want certainty when buying off the plan in the current market – the North Surfers precinct is being transformed by developers who have a long and proven track record, and the balance sheets to deliver projects of such scale," said Mr McMahon. "The project is under construction and on schedule for delivery.







A level of amenity rarely delivered...

"Conversely, Paradiso Place involves not just a residential precinct over an entire block but a lifestyle precinct that offers enormous value adds to their investment in terms of amenity and lifestyle assets."

SPG Land is lifting the standard of apartment living on the Gold Coast, unveiling a suite of resort-style amenities at Paradiso Place designed to deliver a fully integrated lifestyle at scale.

Positioned just 90 metres from the coastline, the three-tower project has been designed as a vertical beachside village – a single, purpose-built environment where residents can live, work and socialise across hospitality, wellness, retail and leisure, all within the same address.

At the centre of it all, an expansive podium level is dedicated entirely to wellness and recreation: a resort-style pool anchored by alfresco dining zones, plus sauna, spa, cold plunge and steam rooms.

> "Buyers today are looking for more than just an apartment – they want a complete lifestyle."
>
> *STEPHEN WANG, Marketing Director, SPG Land*

Residents also have access to a lap pool, wellness terrace and gym facilities designed to support daily routines rather than occasional use.

Elevated above the podium, Level 16 has been given over to connection – with an exclusive residents lounge and library, private wine room, event space, plus a dedicated co-working space built for a generation of residents who work remotely as often as they commute.

At ground level, a vibrant retail and dining precinct – boutique retail, a gourmet market, signature dining experiences – activates the streetscape, opening onto a landscaped garden plaza and retail laneway designed to create a genuinely walkable, village-style environment for residents, locals and visitors alike.

Hospitality-led food and beverage offerings run throughout the precinct, reinforcing the sense of a destination rather than a development.

"Buyers today are looking for more than just an apartment – they want a complete lifestyle," said Stephen Wang, Marketing Director at SPG Land.

"At Paradiso Place, we've created an environment where everything is considered, from how residents unwind, to how they work, entertain and connect with others."

Mr Wang said the scale of the site had allowed SPG Land to deliver an amenity mix typically reserved for high-end hotels.

"The size of the site has let us think differently about how people actually live," Mr Wang said.

"We've been able to bring together a level of amenity rarely delivered within a single residential project, while still protecting a genuine sense of community and privacy for residents."

Spanning a 1.15-hectare site, Paradiso Place will deliver 845 residences across three towers rising 41, 40 and 44 levels, connected via a network of podiums and shared spaces.

The amenity strategy sits within SPG Land's broader push to deliver value-driven luxury – apartments here are priced up to 20 per cent below comparable new developments across the Gold Coast market.

It's a scale of amenity rarely attempted within a single residential development, and according to Mr McMahon it's precisely what buyers are responding to.

"People aren't just buying an apartment – they're buying certainty it'll actually get built," he said.

"Construction is progressing on site. And buyers are dealing with a developer with a real international track record – not an untested local outfit. Put those together, and people stop buying on faith. They buy with confidence."

"That's why we committed a full block to this level of amenity instead of scaling it back," McMahon added. "We knew we could deliver it – so we built the masterplan to do it properly."

Construction on Paradiso Place is now underway on a full city block, with apartments starting from $905,000 and the first of three towers on track for completion in late 2029.

Burleigh's Lifestyle Investment Proposition takes shape with *LURA LAUNCH*

With construction rising to Level 13 and completion due late 2027, the $120 million Lura development is offering Burleigh Heads buyers a rare middle ground – beachside flexibility without the ultra-luxury price tag.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **Supplied by NPA Projects**

A new Burleigh Heads apartment development is targeting a growing breed of lifestyle investors who want to use their property as a personal retreat while tapping into the suburb's lucrative holiday accommodation market.

Lura, at 1871 Gold Coast Highway, is preparing to launch this month, with construction already progressing to Level 13 and completion expected in late 2027.

The $120 million, 96-residence development has been approved for short-term letting, giving owners the flexibility to use their property when visiting the Gold Coast and make it available to holidaymakers at other times.

NPA Projects CEO Andrew Erwin said the proposition was suited to buyers who wanted their investment to offer both lifestyle and income potential.

"Burleigh is somewhere people want to come and spend time, and Lura gives investors the opportunity to have a property in one of the Gold Coast's most desirable holiday and liveability destinations, with the flexibility to use it themselves," Mr Erwin said.

"That combination is increasingly attractive to people who want their investment to work for them, while also having a place they can enjoy as a holiday escape, weekender or local bolthole."

Located adjacent to the newly completed Mondrian hotel and approximately 100 metres from Burleigh Heads Beach and 200 metres from the G light rail, Lura is within walking distance of James Street's restaurants, cafes and boutique retailers. Burleigh Head National Park, beachfront parks and local surf clubs are also within easy reach.

The development will comprise studio, one, two and three-bedroom residences, with selected dual-key configurations allowing owners to rent the apartments independently or occupy one while making the other available for short-term accommodation.

Lura's amenity offering includes a wellness centre on Level 2 featuring a gymnasium, dedicated, sauna, hot and cold plunge.

For those seeking leisure, a rooftop pool, sundeck and barbecue and dining area will provide additional spaces for residents and guests to relax and entertain.

Designed by multidisciplinary practice MODE, the residences will feature engineered timber flooring





> *We think there is a real gap in the market for a product that gives investors access to a tightly held beachside location.*
>
> – ANDREW ERWIN, CEO, NPA PROJECTS

to living areas, wool loop pile carpet to bedrooms, stone benchtops and brushed nickel tapware.

Mr Erwin said Lura was bringing a different investment proposition to Burleigh's tightly held apartment market, where much of the new stock is concentrated at the luxury end.

"There is some incredible property being delivered in Burleigh, but much of the new product is aimed at the very top end, with half-floor and full-floor residences priced at $5 million and above," he said.

"Lura gives buyers a broader choice of property types and price points, while also offering the flexibility of short-term accommodation approval. Residences at Lura range from approximately $500,000 to $3 million, providing a range of options for buyers looking to enter Burleigh's tightly held apartment market. At the upper end, buyers can secure a three-bedroom residence for under $3 million, just 100 metres from Burleigh Heads Beach.

"We think there is a real gap in the market for a product that gives investors access to a tightly held beachside location. "Burleigh has an incredibly strong identity as a lifestyle and holiday destination, and we believe that creates a compelling proposition for investors who want their property investment to be connected to a place they genuinely value and want to spend time in themselves."

Lura is being developed by TANCA, with BDCM appointed as builder and high-rise specialists T-Cubed Consulting as project manager. Sales are being handled by NPA Projects.



Lura under construction at Burleigh Heads. Completion expected late 2027.



Scan QR Code to make an enquiry

purpose beyond profit



For most property developers, success is measured in projects completed, apartments sold and profits generated.

For Sherpa founder Christie Leet, those measures matter, but they are only part of the story.

At 58, after decades in business and more than eight years living on the Gold Coast, Leet is increasingly focused on a different question: what happens when commercial success becomes a vehicle for something bigger than itself?

"I think you're healthy and happy when you have a cause bigger than yourself," he says.

That simple philosophy has become a defining principle of Sherpa, the development company he founded, and the reason the business has committed 10 per cent of its profits to the Sherpa Foundation, a charitable vehicle that is already directing substantial funding into community causes and is designed to grow for generations to come.

Yet Leet is noticeably uncomfortable talking about the donations themselves – donations to a range of charitable community causes and organisations in need that are now into the millions.

The story, he insists, is not about philanthropy but about community; about building places and contributing to communities where people can thrive.

Leet spent the first five decades of his life in Airlie Beach, building businesses and raising a family in what many Australians would consider paradise.

Yet after relocating to the Gold Coast eight and a half years ago, his perspective changed.

"At the time, I thought the Whitsundays was the best place on earth to live, make a dollar and recreate. But since coming to the Gold Coast, I think this is the best place on earth to live, recreate, have a business and raise a family."

The move proved transformational.

While many developers are attracted to the Gold Coast's growth story, Leet became fascinated by something deeper: the opportunity to shape communities rather than simply construct buildings.

That distinction now sits at the heart of Sherpa's evolution.

"We're pretty good at building real estate, but so are lots of others," he says.

"But developing communities is where it gets interesting. We want to support and sustain the areas where we operate – not only by providing new homes for people from all walks of life but to support those in the community that might not have that opportunity."

That philosophy has become particularly evident in Palm Beach, where Sherpa has established a growing presence through its Flourish-branded developments and where the company is transforming the beachside suburb from into a modernised, contemporary community.



Sherpa founder Christie Leet believes the true measure of success isn't simply the buildings a developer creates, but the communities they strengthen. Through a commitment to housing, connected neighbourhoods and a foundation funded by 10 per cent of company profits, he is redefining what legacy looks like on the Gold Coast.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **supplied by Sherpa**

Left: Nexus Palm Beach photographed by Andy MacPherson.

From soup kitchens to supporting grassroots clubs like the Palm Beach Boardriders Club, Sherpa is as community minded as the development community can get.

"The Palm Beach Boardriders' Club approached us a couple of years ago as they had lost their sponsorship. That meant the possibility of not being able to fund kids to go to surf comps around the country or upgrade equipment. We stepped in as it provided a practical need to a surfing club that is as grassroots as it gets and has a rich history on the Gold Coast.

"Despite traditionally being one of the smaller clubs on the Gold Coast, the club is now teeming with local kids and we're proud to be playing a very small part in its growth."

While much of the Gold Coast apartment market has moved steadily upmarket, Leet has deliberately focused on creating opportunities for local residents and first-home buyers.

His view is that developers have a responsibility to identify value opportunities that benefit buyers, not just maximise prices.

Several years ago, Sherpa identified what Leet believed was a significant pricing imbalance between beachfront and beachside property in Palm Beach.

"We identified three years ago that the price difference should be around 30 per cent between a beachfront site and a beachside site," he says.

"In Palm Beach it was actually 100 per cent."

That gap presented an opportunity.

Rather than chasing luxury-only projects, Sherpa focused on creating developments that could appeal to a broader cross-section of buyers, particularly owner-occupiers.

The result has been a series of projects designed to encourage genuine communities rather than transient investor stock.

Leet believes diversity within a building is essential.

"We're focused on working hard to enable first-home buyers to get into our projects and working our way up the building right through to high-end penthouse owners that want extraordinary luxury as well," he says.

"It's much more exciting, challenging and rewarding to build a building with a number of different offerings in it that attracts lots and lots of different people that form one beautiful community."

That approach was demonstrated at Flourish Soleira, where all apartments released under a dedicated first-home buyer initiative sold out quickly, with the overwhelming majority purchased by local residents.

For Leet the outcome wasn't simply a successful sales campaign - it was evidence that communities become stronger when local people are given opportunities to remain in the suburbs they call home.

Underlying Sherpa's development philosophy is a broader belief that business can serve a greater purpose.

Several years ago Leet reflected on a concept he had first encountered decades earlier.

"I can remember going to church years and years ago and hearing about tithing," he says.





Sherpa Projects developing communities from Chevron Island to Palm Beach.





> I think you're healthy and happy when you have a cause bigger than yourself.
> — *Christie Leet*

The principle stayed with him.

Eventually, he decided to apply it to his business life.

The result was a commitment to direct 10 per cent of Sherpa's profits into the Sherpa Foundation – a foundation that has donated into a range of community charities and fundraising ventures.

Importantly, the foundation is structured not simply as a donation vehicle but as a long-term legacy fund.

Half of the contributions are distributed into charitable causes, while the remainder is invested, creating a growing capital base designed to generate future income and expand the foundation's impact over time.

The concept reflects Leet's tendency to think in decades rather than development cycles.

"All of my thinking is, what are we doing for the next 41 years?" he says.

"I'm really thinking about what us building in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast every year, and what that profit divided by 10 per cent, really means over a long period of time."

As the foundation grows, so too will its capacity to support initiatives that strengthen communities across South East Queensland.

For Leet, the charitable commitment is simply another form of innovation.

Throughout his career he has been motivated by finding different ways to solve problems.

The vision reflects a belief that people live better when they feel connected to those around them.

It also reflects a broader understanding of what community means.

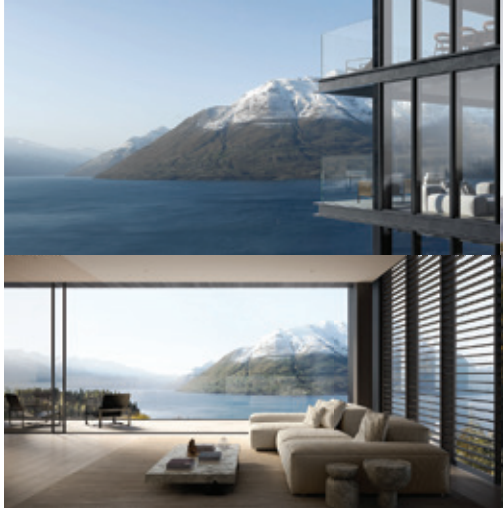
As housing affordability continues to challenge many Australians and communities grapple with increasing social and economic pressures, Leet believes businesses have an important role to play.

"The success of a development should not only be measured by financial returns but by the positive outcomes it creates for the people who live within it and the broader community that surrounds it," he says.

From creating pathways for first-home buyers, to fostering connected neighbourhoods, to establishing a foundation that will continue giving long after today's projects are complete, the company is attempting to redefine what community development can look like.

For Leet, success is no longer about what is accumulated. It's about what is created, shared and ultimately left behind.

And if Sherpa's next chapter unfolds as he hopes, the buildings may become only part of the legacy.





ASPEN *of the South*

Australian buyers pour NZ$37 million into Queenstown's Lakeview Te Taumata in weeks, pushing pre-sales toward NZ$200 million as Federal Budget fallout drives a rush across the Tasman.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **supplied**

A surge in Australian buyers following the recent Federal Budget has driven NZ$37 million in luxury apartment sales in recent weeks at Queenstown's landmark Lakeview Te Taumata development, with investors increasingly looking across the Tasman for premium property opportunities.

Five residences worth a combined NZ$37 million have sold recently, including four apartments at approximately NZ$8 million each and another at NZ$5 million. The buyers came from Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Victoria, underscoring growing demand from affluent Australians seeking to diversify their property holdings.

The latest sales have pushed total pre-sales at the project towards NZ$200 million ahead of construction commencing on the first stage of the NZ$2 billion-plus development, which is scheduled for completion in 2028.

Australian enquiries have increased by 50 per cent since the Federal Budget, while Australian purchasers now account for approximately 80 per cent of all recent sales, reflecting growing demand from investors reassessing their property portfolios.

The renewed momentum comes as Australian investors respond to changes announced in the recent Federal Budget and increasingly look to New Zealand's luxury property market, attracted by its premium lifestyle offering and tax settings, including the absence of a broad-based capital gains tax in New Zealand.

Urban Activation Director of Sales Matt George said buyer behaviour had shifted noticeably in recent weeks.

"In the past month alone we've secured NZ$37 million in sales to Australian buyers. These are sophisticated buyers who are actively looking to diversify their investments while securing exceptional lifestyle assets in internationally recognised destinations. Queenstown has always appealed to Australian buyers, but we're seeing a new level of urgency. The combination of a tightly held luxury market, New Zealand's tax settings and Queenstown's global reputation is proving to be a compelling proposition. Approaching NZ$200 million in pre-sales before construction commences is a significant milestone. It demonstrates the depth of demand for premium product and provides tremendous confidence as we move into the construction phase."

Construction of Stage One has commenced with CMP Construction appointed to deliver Building A, comprising a 77 room Alpine Lodge, together with Buildings B and C, delivering 94 luxury apartments. Completion is anticipated in 2028.

Current pricing includes:

- Two-bedroom apartments from NZ$2 million
- Dual-key residences (one plus studio) from NZ$2.55 million
- Three-bedroom apartments from NZ$6 million
- Four-bedroom apartments from NZ$9 million
- Six-bedroom penthouse from NZ$25.5 million

Designed around wellness, luxury hospitality and world-class alpine living, Lakeview Te Taumata will ultimately comprise luxury residences, internationally branded hotels, restaurants, retail, wellness facilities and public spaces, creating a vibrant extension of the Queenstown town centre.

The NZ$2 billion-plus masterplanned precinct is being delivered by Melbourne-based 94 Feet and is expected to become one of the Southern Hemisphere's premier lifestyle destinations.



new ground, new nets, NEW ERA

As the 2026/27 season approaches, the Bonogin Valley Bulls are unrecognisable from the club that took the field last summer — and that's very much the point.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Staff** Photography: **courtesy of Bonogin Valley Bulls Cricket Club**



Bond University brings a pipeline of talented, driven young cricketers.

There's a particular feeling that hangs over the Frank Chaston Sporting Fields in late winter — fresh-cut couch grass underfoot, the ground still finding its shape ahead of the season. For the Bonogin Valley Bulls, that feeling is progress.

Walk the perimeter of the club's home ground today and you'll find a facility barely resembling the one locals have known for years. Drainage has been overhauled.

The outfield has been re-profiled. New fencing lines the boundary, and the practice area has been rebuilt from the turf up. It's the kind of infrastructure



The Bulls offer a genuine community base.



Bonogin Valley Bulls Cricket Club proud team members.

work that rarely makes headlines but changes everything about how a club feels to play for.

"You can build a strong squad, but if the ground doesn't match the ambition, something always feels out of step," says Brian Usher, President of the Bonogin Valley Bulls Cricket Club, surveying the freshly laid turf near the clubhouse. "This is us closing that gap."

And the work isn't finished. More upgrades are planned for Frank Chaston across the coming months, a signal that this isn't a one-off facelift but a sustained investment in the club's long-term home.

Off the field, there's a quieter but equally significant change underway: the club is in the process of securing a liquor licence for the clubhouse, a move that will transform match days from a strictly cricket affair into the kind of social hub that keeps players, families and sponsors lingering long after the last ball is bowled.

But renovated grounds and a future bar are, in truth, the entrée. The main course — the story that will define the Bulls' season and quite possibly their next decade — is the amalgamation with Bond University Cricket.

From this season, Bond University's playing group will pull on the Bonogin Bulls colours, competing under a single, unified banner. It's a merger built on obvious logic. Bond brings a pipeline of talented, driven young cricketers — students who train with discipline and play with ambition — while the Bulls offer a genuine community base, a home ground now undergoing serious investment, and the kind of grassroots identity that university cricket alone can't replicate.

"This is about combining what each side does best," Usher explains. "Bond has produced outstanding cricketers for years. We've built a club people are proud to represent. Put those together and you've got something genuinely competitive."

> *"You're not just joining a team, you're joining a community. And together, we think we've got the depth to go all the way.*
> *– BRIAN USHER, PRESIDENT, BONOGIN VALLEY BULLS CRICKET CLUB*

There's a practical benefit too. Through the partnership, Bonogin will not only share in Bond's growing pool of student talent, but the two clubs will also share access to training facilities — including Bond's recently refurbished nets — giving players from both sides more opportunities to prepare together throughout the season.

For a club that has always valued making the most of what it has, it's a welcome boost. Regular access to another well-maintained training space means more variety in preparation for both bowlers and batters, spreading the load across facilities rather than leaning on one alone. It's a small shift that adds up over the course of a long season.

None of it means much, of course, without the players — and that's where the Bulls are most excited. The incoming Bond contingent doesn't just pad out the playing list; it deepens it, giving selectors genuine, healthy competition for spots across every grade for the first time in years.

"We want to say it plainly — welcome to every Bond player pulling on the Bulls colours this season," says Usher. "You're not just joining a team, you're joining a community. And together, we think we've got the depth to go all the way."

It's a bold statement, but this year it doesn't feel like bravado — it feels like arithmetic. Better ground. Shared facilities. Deeper talent pool. A clubhouse becoming a genuine gathering place. Individually, each is a meaningful upgrade.

Together, they add up to a club entering 2026/27 with more ambition, more resources and more reason to believe than at any point in its recent history.

The Bonogin Valley Bulls have spent the off-season building. Now it's time to see what they've built.

■ *For more info visit www.bvbcc.com.au*







GOLD COAST GEARS UP *for the Nation's biggest* JUNIOR FOOTBALL FESTIVAL

THE PREMIER INVITATIONAL RETURNS WITH 800 TEAMS, 10,400 PLAYERS AND A $50 MILLION ECONOMIC KICK FOR THE REGION.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Team** Photography: **supplied**

The Gold Coast is about to become the epicentre of junior football in Australasia. From 25 September to 4 October, the Gold Coast will host the 2026 Premier Invitational, the country's largest junior football tournament, drawing more than 800 teams, 10,400 players and 2,400 coaches, managers and support staff from across Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Now firmly established as the number one junior tournament in the nation, the Invitational spans nine days of competition across boys' divisions from Under 8 to Under 16 and girls' divisions from Under 10 to Under 17. Day One is dedicated to grading, ensuring teams are placed into divisions that match their calibre before the real business begins.

> "It's impossible to not feel the energy from this incredible football tournament."
>
> *– Tom Tate, Mayor of the Gold Coast*

The calibre on display continues to climb. A-League clubs Adelaide United, Melbourne Victory and Central Coast Mariners have all confirmed junior teams for 2026, underlining the tournament's growing reputation as a breeding ground for future Socceroos and Matildas.

The numbers tell their own story of growth. Last year's tournament brought 670 teams and 144,349 visitors to the region, generating an economic benefit of $30.3 million for Queensland. With participation set to grow by almost 20 per cent in 2026, organisers expect attendance beyond 172,000 and an economic impact surpassing $50 million.

The event forms part of Magic United FC's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, which aims to grow the tournament to 1,000 teams, alongside ongoing discussions to secure expanded venues and major stadium infrastructure across the coast in future years.

Beyond the pitch, the tournament's nine-day window gives visiting families the chance to explore everything the Gold Coast has to offer, from theme parks and the hinterland to the region's beaches and shopping precincts – turning a football fixture into a nine-day family holiday with a soundtrack of whistles and cheers.

With backing from Tourism and Events Queensland, Experience Gold Coast and a growing list of national partners, the Premier Invitational is shaping up as the city's biggest sporting drawcard of the spring calendar.

■ ***For further information of sponsoring the event please contact Andrew Robinson andy@themagicgroup.com.au, www.premierinvitational.com.au***





SYDNEY PREMIER LEAGUE

DIAMOND LEAGUE

PREMIER INVITATIONAL

MAGIC GROUP

PRESEASON CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

QUEENSLAND PREMIER LEAGUE






Huxley & Friel


Jane Alicia


RB Brothers

GROUNDWATER'S Homegrown Heroes Set to shine in Broadbeach

FROM BLUEGRASS REVIVALISTS TO TEENAGE ROCKERS, THE GOLD COAST'S RISING COUNTRY TALENT TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT GROUNDWATER 2026.

Words: **Glenn Tozer** Photography: **supplied**

When the Groundwater Country Music Festival returns to Broadbeach from 16 to 18 October 2026, thousands of music lovers will once again flock to the Gold Coast for free live music, beachside atmosphere and authentic country storytelling. Held across parks, streets and venues throughout Broadbeach, Groundwater has earned a reputation as one of Australia's most distinctive country music festivals, blending world-class performances with the relaxed lifestyle of the coast.

While headline acts always draw the crowds, one of Groundwater's greatest strengths is its ability to showcase emerging artists and local Gold Coast talent. This year's festival features an impressive collection of homegrown performers who reflect the depth and diversity of country music across South East Queensland.

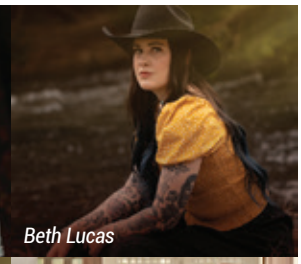
Among them are Huxley & Friel, whose recent release *Live From the Yellow Room* captures the essence of what makes them so compelling.

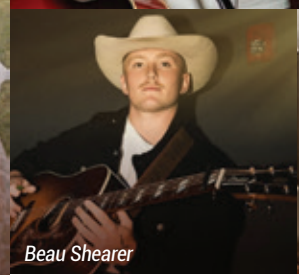
Recorded live, the EP highlights their masterful bluegrass musicianship, featuring mandolin, guitar, rich harmonies and timeless favourites including *Church Street Blues* and *Tennessee Waltz*. Their performance promises an authentic and heartfelt celebration of traditional acoustic music. I remember this duo romancing a little crowd at a local park in Mudgeeraba one Friday night a few years ago so it'll be great to see them on a bigger stage as their sound has evolved to festival status.

Fresh off performing at the Mudgeeraba Street Party, and smaller venues across SEQ, another act turning heads is the RB Brothers, a remarkable four-piece family band from the southern Gold Coast. Raised on a small farm and aged between


Paper Daisies


Beau Shearer


Beth Lucas


Beau Shearer


Greer Sullivan

just nine and sixteen, these young musicians are proving that talent, passion and hard work know no age limit. Their infectious energy and feel-good country sound have already won them a growing fan base, and festival audiences are sure to be charmed by their enthusiasm.

Emerging artist Beau Shearer, from Fingal, which we'll claim as from GC despite being slightly south of the border, is rapidly establishing himself as one of Australia's most exciting new country voices. Fresh from a songwriting trip to Nashville and preparing to release his debut EP later this year, Beau arrives at Groundwater with significant industry momentum after supporting artists including local legend Casey Barnes.

Country music fans will also have the chance to experience the powerful songwriting of Beth Lucas. Combining alt-country energy with deeply personal storytelling, Beth has earned significant recognition through multiple songwriting awards and prestigious industry scholarships. Her emotionally resonant songs and commanding stage presence make her a standout performer to watch. While she's from further north around Redcliffe, we're excited to have her with us for this year's Groundwater.

Known for her gritty vocals and heartfelt performances, Greer Sullivan continues to captivate audiences across the country music scene. Backed by a talented band, Greer's songs are delivered with sincerity and soul, creating an authentic connection that resonates long after the final note.

> *"Together, these artists showcase the incredible talent emerging from the Gold Coast and nearby."*

Groundwater will also showcase local artist Jane Alicia, whose independent approach to songwriting and recording has seen her steadily build momentum on the Gold Coast. Audiences will gain a special preview of material from her forthcoming debut album and witness the next chapter of a promising musical journey.

Adding a contemporary country-pop flavour to the festival are Paper Daisies, a Gold Coast duo whose shimmering harmonies and evocative storytelling evoke open roads, golden sunsets and unforgettable memories. Their blend of pop hooks and country heart offers something truly fresh.

Completing this impressive lineup of rising stars is Tyler Lock, a recent CMAA Academy graduate whose debut single *Livin' for Today* earned national recognition and established him as one of Australia's most exciting young country singer-songwriters.

Together, these artists showcase the incredible talent emerging from the Gold Coast and nearby. At Groundwater 2026, festival-goers will not only discover their next favourite act but also experience the future of Australian country music, all against the backdrop of Broadbeach's iconic coastal setting.



RIFF TO RUIN

In non-Groundwater news, another new rock act is making waves in the local scene, emerging from Miami State high music excellence program and the Hanlon Music School. Riff to Ruin are only just teenagers but are playing to rave reviews, at Goosemania and other rock venues in the city. Marley, Sam, Levi and Jaxson have big things ahead of them for sure.



SAS Australia



Q&A SPOTLIGHT: actor, mentor, DAN EWING

BEYOND THE SCREEN, DAN EWING DISCUSSES PURPOSE, PERSEVERANCE AND PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION.

Interview: **Caroline Russo** *hushhushbiz.com* Photography: **supplied**

With a career spanning television, film and stage, Dan Ewing has become one of Australia's most recognisable actors. Beyond the screen, he has also embraced a new chapter as a mentor, coach and advocate for personal growth. We caught up with Dan to talk about his childhood, acting journey, sobriety, mentoring and what truly matters most in life.

Let's begin in your childhood. Where were you raised? What are some of your strongest memories of growing up, and who were you closest to in your family?

I was born at Manly Hospital and raised on Sydney's Northern Beaches, in Forestville. It was a cracking place to grow up — really family-oriented, with sport and community at the centre of everything.

Sport pretty much ran my childhood. Basketball in particular became a bit of an obsession, and I was lucky enough to go on and represent Manly Warringah. A lot of what I still lean on today — discipline, teamwork, showing up — came from those early days.

I was one of four kids, so I was close to everyone just by default really. But I've got to mention my beautiful mum, who sadly passed away in 2021 from cancer. As I got older we grew incredibly close, and I'm grateful for the memories I had with her. Through my work she even got to meet people like Ronan Keating and James Blunt, which I think safely cemented my status as favourite child.

What was your first job, and did it teach you about hard work and responsibility?

My first job was working with my dad at the old abattoirs in Homebush. While other kids were at the beach, I was at Underwood Meats during school holidays.

At the time it probably felt a bit rough around the edges, but looking back it was brilliant. It taught me the value of hard work, earning a dollar, and just getting on with it. I'm very grateful to my old man for that — those lessons have



stuck with me ever since.

Many people know you from your role as Heath Braxton on Home and Away. How did that role change your life, both professionally and personally?

I'm eternally grateful to *Home and Away*, EP Lucy Addario, and script producer Louise Bowes for the trust they put in me.

It's an insanely successful show globally, but what meant the most was being given the chance to take on really challenging storylines and grow as an actor. And of course, running around topless on Palm Beach at 5am became part of the job description.

It was one of those jobs that set a benchmark. Even now, I find myself thinking there isn't a production I walk onto where I don't go, "*Home and Away* was pretty efficient, actually."

You've spoken openly about facing difficult periods in your life and your decision to become sober. What was the turning point?

For me it was a slow shift rather than one big moment. I could take time off and always reset for work, so I never really saw it clearly as an issue.

Things changed after my mum passed away in 2021. As the eldest sibling I carried a lot of that responsibility, and instead of dealing with it properly, I bottled a lot of it up. And I was turning to the bottle.

Eventually I made the decision I needed to show up better — for my family, my friends, and the people around me. I'm almost two years sober now, and life has never been better.

What changes have surprised you the most about yourself since embracing sobriety?

What surprised me most is how many people have reached out.

I knew I'd show up better as a father and family man, but I didn't expect the number of strangers connecting and sharing their own stories.

> "A LOT OF WHAT I STILL LEAN ON TODAY –DISCIPLINE, TEAMWORK, SHOWING UP – CAME FROM THOSE EARLY DAYS."

Through coaching, speaking, and social media, I've been able to have some really meaningful conversations with people going through their own stuff.

I don't pretend to have all the answers. I just share my experience honestly and try to give people a few practical tools to help them move forward. If my very imperfect, slightly chaotic story helps someone else, then that's a win.

What inspired you to step into mentoring and coaching?

It actually grew pretty organically from people reaching out.

As more conversations happened, I realised I could do more than just share my story — I could actually help people apply it in their own lives.

Through coaching, speaking, and working with men's groups and individuals, I've been lucky enough to support people from all walks of life. I'm not pretending to be a guru, but I do believe in honesty, accountability and doing the work.

If I can help someone take even one step forward, that's enough for me.

What are some common challenges actors face, and what advice do you give them?

One thing that really surprised me is how much dodgy advice and poor representation is out there.

Confidence and craft are always part of it, but a big part of what I do is helping actors understand what good representation actually looks like. Your agent should work for you — not the other way around.

If you're paying subscription fees, being charged for headshots through your agent, paying for "mandatory" workshops, or getting sold a casting platform that never actually leads to work, those are red flags. It might sound blunt, but I care about it. Helping actors level up their representation is something I take a lot of pride in.

What's next for you creatively?

It's already been a big year. My stage show has been extended again and is heading to festivals in the UK and US, which is exciting.

I've also got *Zombie Plane* coming out — an action comedy in post with Chuck Norris, Sophie Monk and Vanilla Ice, which still makes me laugh saying out loud.

Then there's *Unspoken*, a drama set in 1955 Fiji. I play a British social worker who falls in love with a local woman in a time when that wasn't exactly acceptable. It's a beautiful story and I'm really proud of it.

And look… there's also a couple of other things in the works I can't talk about yet. Let's just say studio lawyers are expensive.

When all is said and done, what do you hope your legacy will be?

I only really started thinking about legacy after turning 41.

For me it comes down to authenticity and service. I used to spend more time worrying about ego and ambition. Now it's more about intention.

Whether I'm acting, coaching, speaking, playing basketball, or helping someone move a fridge, I just want people to feel better for having crossed paths with me.

If I can leave people feeling a bit more energised, a bit more seen, or a bit more capable of moving forward in their own life, then I've done alright.








THE VALLEY ESTATE

PARIS & MATTHEW

Let yourself get lost in love at The Valley Estate, the bespoke, one-off venue crafted to inspire celebration and reflection with loved ones. Here's a peek inside the elegant and loved-up wedding of Paris & Matthew.

The story of how you both met?

Matt and I knew each other growing up, as my brother and Matt played for the same soccer team. In 2020, I moved back to our hometown during COVID and Matt and I ended up at the same gym.

After an awkward conversation with my brother, Matt asked me on a date, and that was the start of our relationship. I later moved to the Gold Coast for work, and a year later moved to America to dance on a cruise ship. We spent the first two years doing long distance before I finally moved home to start our life together.

How did the proposal occur?

In 2025, Matt and I bought our first home together, with plans to renovate the entire house. On the day of settlement, we decided to have some drinks on our balcony to celebrate before renovations began. When I walked inside, the main entrance wall had been painted with 'Will you marry me?' and Matt was down on one knee. It was such a surprise and the most perfect, intimate moment.

Why did you choose The Valley Estate to host your amazing wedding?

I first saw The Valley Estate in 2021 when someone I knew had their wedding there, and I fell in love with the venue instantly. I loved the gardens and greenery throughout the property, the multiple ceremony locations to suit different visions, and The Manor reception space with its beautiful chandelier and staircase – a literal dream. After touring the venue, meeting the wonderful staff and learning more about how our day would run, I knew it was the perfect location for our wedding.

What inspired you to choose the ceremony location at The Valley Estate?

I knew I wanted to use The Chapel as our ceremony location. The Chapel has a traditional, cosy feel and looks out onto the greenery that I fell in love with. Although we had a large wedding, our ceremony felt intimate, as everyone was so close and connected to us. We also loved getting to ring the chapel bell before exiting after the ceremony – it was like something out of a movie.

What is your fondest memory of the day?

Choosing just one memory would be almost impossible. Our day was so full of love and gratitude, and we were both beaming the entire day. One of my favourite memories was walking down the aisle to Matt, a moment I had envisioned my whole life. As soon as we saw each other, all my nerves went away and it finally clicked that I was marrying the love of my life. Other special moments were slow dancing with our parents during our reception, listening to everyone's heartfelt speeches, and dancing the night away until my feet hurt with all of our favourite people.

What was the inspiration behind styling?

I mostly chose what felt most suited to Matt and I. We wanted our day to have a traditional, classic style that we know we will still love in the years to come. My Mum chose beautiful white florals for her wedding 30 years ago that I still adore, so I wanted to follow a similar style.

The Valley Estate also offers some incredible upgrades that helped shape our styling, from the Champagne Cart during cocktail hour and the smoke machine during our first dance to the confetti cannon to end the night. We added additional chandeliers and white draping to The Manor for our reception, so I chose simple table styling elements to keep the space from looking too busy. As we had a winter wedding, I chose chocolate brown for the bridesmaids' dresses and carried this colour through our signage and smaller details, including the guest book, table-setting ribbons and ring boxes. I followed my intuition and was so happy that it all came together with the elegance I was aiming for.

Your favourite dish of the night?

My favourite dish was the Primavera Arancini served during cocktail hour. A big goal of the day was to wrap up photos a little earlier so we could both enjoy cocktail hour with everyone – and I'm so glad we made that decision.

Matt's favourite dish was the Beef Eye Fillet with Dauphinoise Potatoes and Tarragon Bearnaise, served for dinner as one of our alternate drop options.

All of the food throughout the evening was amazing, and no guest walked away hungry.

Favourite photo location?

The entire venue is filled with beautiful photo locations, so it's hard to pick just one. Some of my favourite pictures are of Matt and I surrounded by the large pencil pine trees along the Bridal Driveway, in front of the incredible black iron gates. The greenery made for the dreamiest, most timeless photos and matched our vision perfectly.

We also loved The Sanctuary and The Retreat getting-ready spaces. They were the perfect places to start our morning, and the photos taken in those spaces came out beautifully.

Photographer: Evernew Studio

THE VALLEY ESTATE
393 Currumbin Creek Road
Currumbin Waters Qld
1800 908 090

One Spa: *a sanctuary of* WELLNESS & LUXURY



"From infrared sauna sessions to hydrotherapy and meditation, One Spa offers a modern approach to restoration."





DISCOVER A TRANQUIL GOLD COAST ESCAPE WHERE RESTORATIVE TREATMENTS, MODERN WELLNESS EXPERIENCES AND LUXURIOUS SURROUNDINGS COME TOGETHER TO RECONNECT BODY, MIND AND SOUL.

Words: **Ocean Road Editorial Staff**
Photography: **Supplied by One Spa | RACV Royal Pines Resort**

Tucked within the tranquil surrounds of RACV Royal Pines Resort in Benowa, One Spa offers a welcome escape from everyday life. Guests are invited to slow down, reconnect and restore balance to the body, mind and soul. Designed as a sanctuary for wellbeing, the award-winning day spa combines luxury, rejuvenation and holistic wellness in a setting surrounded by lush greenery and picturesque waterways.

Housed within a unique tent-like structure with soaring draped ceilings, One Spa is bathed in natural light and from the moment guests arrive, a sense of calm takes over. Spacious treatment rooms, peaceful relaxation spaces and thoughtfully curated experiences create an environment where wellness becomes effortless. The spa's philosophy is simple: to help guests return to the world as one.

A highlight of the One Spa experience is the Rejuvenation Lounge, a dedicated wellness space designed to support recovery, detoxification and relaxation. Featuring an infrared sauna, Somadome meditation pod and O2 breathing chair, the lounge offers a modern approach to wellbeing, encouraging guests to pause, breathe and recharge, particularly when short on time.

Water therapies form an integral part of the spa journey, with indulgent experiences including hydrotherapy treatments, private jacuzzis, steam rituals and Vichy-style therapies that soothe the body while calming the mind. These restorative treatments complement One Spa's extensive menu of massage and facial therapies.

Whether choosing a tension-relieving massage, a results-driven facial using LaGaia Unedited

skincare, or a signature spa ritual that combines multiple therapies, every treatment is delivered with expert care and attention.

For locals and visitors alike, One Spa is more than a day spa. It is a destination dedicated to wellness, luxury and self-care, where every visit offers an opportunity to relax deeply, restore balance and emerge feeling completely revitalised.

With Christmas just around the corner, a One Spa gift card is the perfect way to give the gift of wellness, relaxation and rejuvenation to someone special.

■ ***Visit racv.com.au/rpronespa today.***

SPRING BEAUTY EDIT
fresh picks for THE SEASON





Compiled by:
Melissa Usher, Fashion & Beauty Editor

Hero Image:
Bali Body

HOT MINUTE HAIR
Created with Australian style icon Elle Ferguson, Hot Minute Hair is all about effortless, lived-in texture with a polished finish. From fresh, voluminous roots to glossy lengths and easy wave touch-ups, the collection makes achieving that undone, cool-girl hair feel wonderfully simple.
RRP FROM $24.95 | hotminutehair.com.au



DERMAANGEL FOR HEALTHY, RADIANT SKIN
Consider this your breakout emergency kit. From the BHA Face & Body Mist designed to target blemishes wherever they appear, to discreet acne patches for day and more intensive overnight patches, DermaAngel makes treating breakouts feel effortless — and a little more stylish.
RRP from $14.99 | dermaangel.com.au



GENEXC FIRMING EYE GEL
A treatment for the delicate eye area, combining advanced clinical formulation with luxury skincare sensibility. Powered by proprietary GeneXC Technology and two forms of Vitamin C, the silky gel helps visibly firm, smooth and illuminate, while delivering powerful antioxidant protection for a brighter, more youthful-looking gaze.
RRP $198 | isclinical.com.au

SUPERNATURAL SUN SAFETY
Antipodes Supernatural SPF50+ Ceramide Silk Facial Sunscreen is a 100% natural-origin mineral facial sunscreen offering broad-spectrum SPF50+ protection and two-hour water resistance. Ceramide III supports the skin barrier, while the luminous, non-greasy finish sits beautifully under makeup.
60 ml currently $53.10, RRP $59 | sassyorganics.com.au





DULESÉ NATURAL DEODORANT
A natural deodorant, elevated. Free from aluminium, baking soda and synthetic fragrance, this sleek refillable formula delivers effective odour protection with a fresh, sophisticated scent — proof that doing less can look and smell, rather good.
RRP $40 (case + refill) Refills $34.99 | dulese.com.au

FIRMS, SMOOTHS & HYDRATES
The Ordinary Lacto-PDRN 4% + B9 Eye Cream is a high-tech skincare at an irresistible price. This vegan PDRN alternative and Vitamin B9 formula visibly firms, smooths and hydrates, leaving the delicate eye area looking fresher, brighter and beautifully lifted.
RRP $15.10 | theordinary.com





ERE PEREZ PEACH GEL BRONZING DROPS
The shortcut to that effortless, just-back-from-holiday glow. A few drops melt into skin, leaving it beautifully bronzed, luminous and fresh.
RRP $59 | sassyorganics.com.au

THE ULTIMATE SKIN RESET
Epicutis Lipid Recovery Mask is a concentrated bio-cellulose mask delivering a serious dose of hydration, leaving dry, stressed or sensitive skin looking calm, plump and beautifully refreshed in just 10-15 minutes. *RRP $160 (Box of 5 masks) | epicutis.com*

SPRING BRINGS FRESH STARTS *AT TONI&GUY BROADBEACH*



This season, we're celebrating an exciting milestone, being named finalists in two categories at the 2026 AHIA Business Awards, Salon Team of the Year, led by Dette Cliff and Team Member of the Year for the talented Alyssia Pearson. These honours mean a lot, but what really matters is the consistency and care our team brings to every client. With long standing stylists, with 80 years combined experience who've grown together through ongoing Toni&Guy training, clients enjoy familiar faces who genuinely know their hair history. It's about beautiful results, yes, but also about trusting professionals who love what they do. If you're ready for a fresh new look this season, we'd love to welcome you and show you the difference an experienced award-finalist team can make.

Spring is the perfect time for a little hair reset. Whether it's brightening your colour, refreshing your cut, adding some softness and movement, or simply bringing tired hair back to life, a seasonal overhaul can make you feel instantly refreshed. With the latest innovations from Wella our premium colour partner and the hottest looks from London, our team can work with you to create a look that feels modern, healthy and completely you, because sometimes a change of season is all the inspiration you need for a fresh new beginning.

■ *To book an appointment visit us online at www.toniandguy.com.au or give us a call on 55399444*



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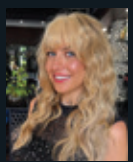
MEET THE TEAM

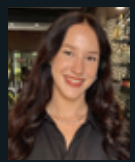

Dette
NATIONAL ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / WELLA MASTER COLOUR EXPERT

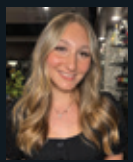

Lissy
SENIOR TECHNICIAN / EXTENTION SPECIALIST

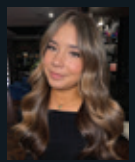

Kelly
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR


Hama
TOP STYLIST / TECHNICIAN


George
EMERGING STYLIST


Ella
STYLIST


Jasmine
APPRENTICE


Stella
APPRENTICE

With over 75 years combined experience, the team at Broadbeach are sure to look after all of your hair needs

Libertine Parfumerie



SPRING SCENTS

Welcome the warmer season with bright citrus and delicate floral notes.
Recommendations by Nick Smart of Libertine Parfumerie

1. Memo Darling Point 75ml RRP $489 (Pear, Orange Blossom, Rose)
2. Juliette has a gun Purple Trouble 100ml RRP $249 (Wild Blackberry, Red Chili Pepper, Ambroxan)
3. Creed Iris Debonair 100ml RRP $559 (Bergamot & Absinthe, English Lavender, French Iris Pallida)
4. L'Objet Rose Noir EDP 100ml RRP $419 (Pepper, Rose, Moss)
5. Trudon Medie Scented Hand Lotion 350ml RRP $179 (Grapefruit, Jasmine, Cedarwood)
6. Frapin The Last Fight EDP 100ml RRP $339 (Saffron, Labdanum, Black Leather)
7. Montale Cedrat Lova 100ml RRP $259 (Sicilian Citron, Mysore Sandalwood, Cuban Tobacco)
8. Amouage Decision 42 Exceptional Extrait 100ml RRP $899 (Neroli, Sandalwood, Labdanum)
9. Nishane Thorns Become Roses Extrait 50ml RRP $399 (Lychee, Rose, Patchouli)
10. D'ORSAY Vanilla Affair Extrait 90ml RRP $399 (Tonka Bean, Vanilla, White Musks)

Available at libertineparfumerie.com.au



VOTARY SUPER SEED SERUM
Botanical skincare with a quietly luxurious feel. This lightweight, fragrance-free serum combines broccoli seed oil, peptides and hyaluronic acid to soothe, deeply hydrate and strengthen the skin barrier — leaving the complexion calm, supple and beautifully resilient.
RRP $158 | votary.com.au

YOUTH RX RITUAL CLEANSE
A beautifully considered daily cleanse that turns skincare into a ritual. The gel-to-bubble formula combines Green Tea, Probiotics and Olive Leaf to gently purify, soothe and rebalance, leaving skin fresh, hydrated and beautifully clean.
Members price RRP $39 normally RRP $99 | youthlabdirect.com.au







REJURAN RECOVER SOOTHING MASK
A cooling, hydrating ritual for stressed skin. This algae-based sheet mask delivers a comforting dose of Panthenol, Allantoin and Hyaluronic Acid to soothe, replenish and leave the complexion feeling beautifully refreshed.
5 x 25ml masks RRP $73 | rejurancosmetics.com.au



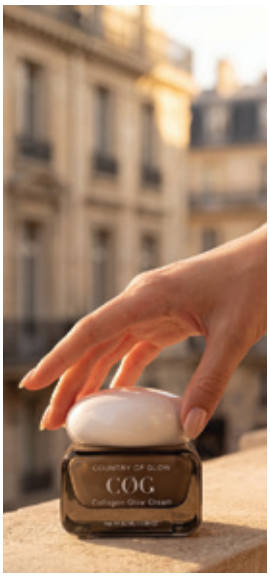
MAKE UP FOR EVER ARTIST COLORGLOW LIP BALMS
The new lip essential with a little more attitude. Available in 10 luminous shades, these sheer, buildable balms deliver a veil of glossy colour and sparkle while hyaluronic acid, blueberry seed oil and peptides leave lips soft, smooth and beautifully plumped.
RRP $26 | sephora.com.au

RETREATMENT BOTANICS INSTANT GLOW FACE MASQUE
Your weekly shortcut to luminous skin. Fruit-derived AHAs, papaya enzymes and Australian botanicals gently exfoliate, hydrate and replenish, revealing a complexion that looks instantly fresher, smoother and beautifully radiant.
RRP $83 | sassyorganics.com.au





GOLDFIELD & BANKS SUNSET HOUR DARK PEACH
There is something undeniably intoxicating about the moment sunset slips into night — and Goldfield & Banks captures it beautifully with Sunset Hour Dark Peach. A deeper, richer evolution of the cult favourite, the fragrance evokes the warm, glowing evenings of Broome, with an alluring sensuality that lingers long after the sun has disappeared.
Exclusively at Sephora RRP 100 ml $280, 10 ml $54 | goldfieldandbanks.com



COUNTRY OF GLOW COLLAGEN GLOW CREAM
For those evenings when your skin is craving a little extra attention, this is the indulgent final step. Rich yet refined, the Collagen Glow Cream combines collagen and peptides to leave skin looking beautifully nourished, smooth and fresh by morning.
RRP $100 | countryofglow.com



IS CLINICAL GENEXC SERUM
A powerhouse of clinical skincare, designed to reveal brighter, smoother, more youthful-looking skin. With 20% L-Ascorbic Acid, powerful antioxidants and proprietary GeneXC Technology, this sophisticated serum helps defend against environmental stressors while visibly refining tone, texture and luminosity.
RRP $198 | isclinical.com.au

MUKTI ORGANICS GOLDEN GLOW BRONZING DROPS
The secret to a beautifully believable golden glow. This silky, buildable serum blends Niacinamide and Ceramides with light-reflective pigments for luminous, sun-kissed skin.
RRP $68 | muktiorganics.com





ORB X WAHINE FRAGRANCE OIL
More than a fragrance, this limited-edition collaboration is an escape in a bottle. Created with Evan Mock and his lifestyle label Wahine, ORB's alcohol-free fragrance oil captures the sun-soaked, salt-air spirit of O'ahu's North Shore. Designed to wear like a second skin and linger throughout the day, it is effortless, transportive and imbued with the kind of cool that can't be manufactured.
RRP USD $149 | orboils.com





REF STOCKHOLM HAIR CARE
Beautiful hair starts at the root. REF's Curl Power No.244 enhances natural curls with soft hold, elasticity and shine, while the AHA Scalp Detox Treatment exfoliates and rebalances the scalp for healthier-looking hair from root to tip.
RRP from $49.50 | smithscollectivebrands.com.au



THE BEAUTY CHEF
Beauty from within, but make it chic. The Beauty Chef's Glow powder supports that coveted lit-from-within radiance with a fermented blend of pre-, pro- and postbiotics, while Body Tone & Glow™ brings collagen, protein and creatine to the daily ritual for a more sculpted, luminous approach to inner beauty. Consider it the modern beauty supplement wardrobe.
Glow Limited Edition RRP $115, currently $89 | Body Tone & Glow™ RRP $49 | thebeautychef.com



MUKTI ORGANICS BIOACTIVE RENEWAL COLLECTION
A luxurious new chapter in Australian skincare, the Bioactive Renewal Collection pairs sophisticated peptides with potent native botanicals and certified organic actives. Designed to support skin as it evolves, the four-piece ritual delivers deep nourishment and visible renewal — leaving the complexion luminous, supple, plumped and beautifully refined. From morning radiance to an indulgent overnight cocoon, this is age-defying skincare, elevated.
RRP from $110 | muktiorganics.com





COUNTRY OF GLOW RICE MOISTURISER
Consider this your shortcut to that coveted, just-left-a-facial glow. Lightweight and silky, the Rice Moisturiser blends fermented rice extract and ceramides for skin that looks hydrated, smooth and effortlessly luminous — without the heaviness.
RRP $90 | countryofglow.com

SPRING *reimagined* at home



Compiled by:
Melissa Usher, Fashion & Beauty Editor

As the season shifts, so does the way we live at home. Spring invites a lighter touch – fresh colour, sculptural forms, beautiful textures and those considered little details that make a space feel effortlessly yours. From statement furniture and playful ceramics to fragrant blooms, botanical cleaning essentials and summer-ready stripes, our edit celebrates the art of refreshing your surroundings. Think relaxed, refined and ready for the season ahead.



LUXE MARBLE

QUIET LUXURY FROM GLOBEWEST
A lesson in sculptural simplicity, GlobeWest's Atlas Twin Nest Coffee Tables bring an unmistakable sense of quiet luxury to the living room. Finished in Satin Calcutta Rosa and Warm Clay, the layered pair balances soft curves with a beautifully tactile, architectural presence – designed to be styled together or moved effortlessly apart.
RRP $5,185 | globewest.com.au



ARTISANAL APPEAL
Add a playful, handcrafted touch to your home with Carla Dinnage Ceramics' Hola Vase, a charming 15cm ceramic piece, or the beautifully sculptural Handmade Ceramic Jug, standing 20cm high. Both bring personality and joy to any space.
Vase $66, Jug $120 | carladinnage.com.au



ECODOWNUNDER BEACH TOWELS
Classic cabana stripes meet everyday practicality. Soft organic cotton, sand-repelling velour and absorbent terry make these a chic essential for the warmer weather.
RRP $19 | ecodownunder.com.au



A BLOOMING BEAUTY
Glasshouse Flower Show is a fragrant celebration of petals in full bloom, blending fresh green apple with jasmine, orange blossom and ylang ylang for a scent that feels lush, luminous and beautifully indulgent. A floral statement piece for the home.
380g RRP $64.95 | Available at Glasshouse Fragrances and David Jones.





ORM LOVES

CLEAN LIVING, ELEVATED
A chic, botanical take on everyday cleaning, Euclove transforms household essentials into something a little more elevated. Australian-made, vegan and cruelty-free, the plant-based range brings beautiful scents and a more considered approach to the daily clean.
RRP from 500ml $14.25 | euclove.com.au

THE Spring STYLE EDIT

Spring arrives with a lighter, more effortless approach to dressing. This season, Ocean Road's edit is all about tactile textures, fluid silhouettes and pieces that capture the spirit of the coast – from artisanal crochet and crisp white tailoring to relaxed resort dressing and statement accessories. Consider it a fresh-season wardrobe with a little wanderlust woven in.



TROPICAL BY NATURE
A fresh take on the classic straw tote, Kulani Kinis' Hibiscus Straw Tote brings a playful tropical note to spring dressing. Woven in natural straw and finished with a statement hibiscus motif, it's the effortless beach-to-street accessory your new-season wardrobe needs.
RRP $70 | kulanikinis.com.au



ORM LOVES

RESORT WEAR, REIMAGINED
Kulani Kinis brings effortless glamour to holiday dressing with its She Sells Summer Bandana Scarf Top and Pant Set. Relaxed, fluid and unapologetically chic, it's a polished take on resort style designed to move seamlessly from sun-drenched afternoons to sunset soirées.
Summer Bandana Scarf Top She Shells $35, Drawstring Pants $118 | kulanikinis.com.au



KULANI KINIS APPLIQUÉ CROCHET SET
A dreamy crochet set made for long summer days, with delicate floral appliqué detailing and a lightweight, handcrafted feel. Equal parts playful and effortlessly chic, it is the perfect.
Applique Crochet Halter Top Sunset Shell RRP $84, Applique Crochet Sarong Sunset Shell RRP $95 | kulanikinis.com.au



SAWYER SHIRTMAKER MAXI DRESS
Effortlessly refined, the Sawyer Shirtmaker Maxi Dress captures the understated elegance of Porcelain by Brigid McLaughlin. Cut in crisp white, its relaxed shirtmaker silhouette makes for an easy, timeless piece with a distinctly coastal feel.
RRP $199 | brigidmclaughlin.com

SUMMER READY



THE NEW COMFORT CLASSIC
Blundstone takes its signature practicality into warmer territory with the Aerocork collection. Lightweight, refined and effortlessly easy to wear, the summer-ready silhouettes bring a fresh, contemporary edge to the brand's enduring Australian appeal.
RRP from $179.95 | blundstone.com.au



STEP inside TENN'S NEW flagship

SETTING A NEW STANDARD FOR FASHION RENTAL

Jaz Stewart, Founder of TENN pictured with a small sample on offer.

TENN Designer Hire has officially opened the doors to its new flagship store. A purpose-built, customer-centric space designed to elevate the dress hire experience into a world of ease, affordable luxury & endless wardrobe options.

Long known as a leader in designer dress rentals across Australia, TENN's new flagship marks a bold step forward, reframing dress hire not simply as an economical alternative, but as an aspirational, boutique experience in its own right.

The new store blends high-end design with thoughtful functionality, creating an environment where every customer feels supported and celebrated.

"Our vision has always been to shift the narrative around dress hire," says Jaz Stewart, Founder. "Hiring an outfit shouldn't feel like a compromise. It should feel like stepping into your own endless luxe wardrobe. This new space really brings to that vision."

The space has been crafted with intentional detail: oversized try on suites, a curated collection of designer pieces featuring premium Australian and international designers and a signature service approach grounded in personal styling, body inclusivity and customer confidence. From special occasion fittings to last minute finds, clients are guided through a seamless experience that mirrors the elevated service of a luxury boutique.

TENN Designer Hire's flagship also reflects the brand's deeper purpose, making designer fashion more accessible and more sustainable.

By choosing to hire, customers extend the life of each garment, reduce fashion waste and enjoy premium looks without the financial or environmental strain of one-wear purchases.

As the brand steps into this next chapter, TENN Designer Hire invites customers to experience dress hire in a way that feels luxe and effortless.

Your ultimate endless wardrobe awaits.

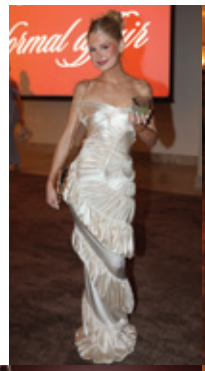
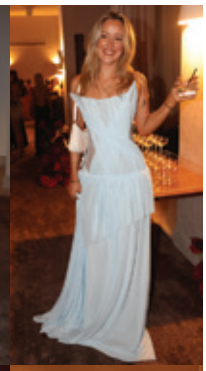
IT'S TIME TO HIRE IT.
STYLE IT. RETURN IT.
TENN.AU



INSIDE TENN'S
Black Tie Debut

The label's inaugural formal affair brought its community together at The Mondrian for a night of glamour, gowns and celebration. TENN welcomed its community to an iconic Gold Coast venue on 15 August for the brand's first-ever black tie event, "A TENN Coded Formal Affair." Held at The Mondrian, the evening gave guests the chance to finally step out in the gowns they'd long admired from the label, transforming the venue into a sea of black tie glamour for one strictly limited-capacity night.

Words & Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*









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Amir Prestige presents
HORIZON: QUEENSLAND'S PROPERTY LEADERS SHARED MARKET INSIGHTS

Industry experts, investors and business leaders gathered for an exclusive luncheon exploring the future of Queensland's property and investment landscape. Queensland's property and business sectors came together on Friday 17 July for an exclusive networking luncheon at The Langham Gold Coast, where influential industry leaders, investors, developers and decision-makers gained valuable insights into the trends shaping the state's future.

The premium event combined high-level networking with a three-course luncheon, premium beverages, live entertainment and a luxury raffle that raised funds in support of RizeUp Australia. A distinguished panel of experts featured Amir Mian (Amir Prestige), Amanda Vaughan (Domain), Lincoln Hughes (REA Group), Evan Karananos (Ramsden Lawyers), Luke Nicholls (Herron Todd White) and Adrian Devito (Clear Accounting).

Words & Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*









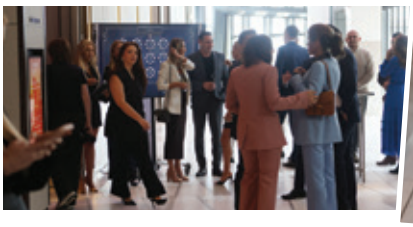












oceanroadmagazine.com.au

LET'S GET
SOCIAL!
FOLLOW US:

OCEAN ROAD

Born from the Ocean
BASTION UNVEILS 'SURFER'

Guests gathered at The Mondrian Burleigh Heads on Friday night to toast the launch of Bastion Development Group's latest coastal address, Surfer. Bastion Development Group marked the launch of Surfer, its new luxury residential project for Surfers Paradise, with an evening event at The Mondrian Hotel, Burleigh Heads on Friday, 4 September. The event brought together industry figures, prospective residents and Gold Coast identities to celebrate the reveal of a project already generating strong interest along the coastal strip.

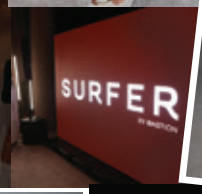
Words & Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*

















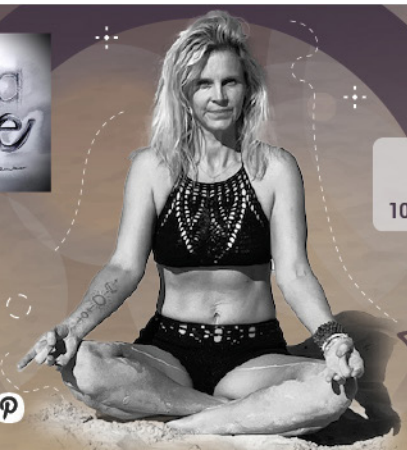








Yoga Love



Single $18
5 class pass $75
10 class pass $135

YogaLove YOGA CLASSES

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Tuesday 8:15am Italo Club & 6pm Mudgeeraba Showgrounds
Wednesday 9am Mudgeeraba Showgrounds
Thursday 6am Mudgeeraba Showgrounds
Friday 9am Mudgeeraba Showgrounds
Saturday 6:45am Mudgeeraba Showgrounds

Online bookings www.yogalove.au

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL 0487 878 736

MediaHunt Celebrates 21 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Clients, industry leaders and friends gathered at Kirra Beach House to celebrate a remarkable milestone for one of Australia's leading property and development PR agencies. MediaHunt marked its 21st anniversary with a special celebration held on the Sunset Terrace at Kirra Beach House on the evening of 16 July. Guests from across the property,development, media and business sectors came together to recognise the achievements of the Gold Coast-based agency and celebrate more than two decades of strategic communications excellence. Drinks, canapés and stunning coastal views provided the perfect backdrop for the milestone occasion.

Words & Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*














ROBINA'S ONLY ROOFTOP BAR + RESTAURANT

+ Modern Australian cuisine
+ Scenic hinterland views
+ Locally sourced produce



Fire & Ice Lights Up the Night
AT THE 2026 GOLD COAST MAYORESS BALL

The Star Gold Coast hosted an unforgettable evening of glamour, generosity and community spirit as guests embraced the spectacular Fire & Ice theme in support of the Gold Coast Mayoress Charity Foundation. The Star Gold Coast was transformed into a dazzling world of contrasts on Saturday evening, July 4, as hundreds of guests gathered for the 2026 Gold Coast Mayoress Charity Foundation Ball. Embracing the spectacular Fire & Ice theme, the black-tie event combined striking styling, outstanding entertainment and an atmosphere of celebration, all in support of the Foundation's ongoing work assisting local charities and community organisations across the Gold Coast.

Words & Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*

















THE LANGHAM
GOLD COAST
langhamhotels.com/goldcoast



Men Who Matter
SUPPORT LOCAL CHARITY

Stories of hope and inspiration shone at the inaugural Men Who Matter event at Currumbin RSL where around 150 guests connected for an afternoon of conversation and contemplation. Punters soaked in stories of tragedy and triumph as big wave charger and surfing wipeout survivor Mark Matthews joined brave and boundless blokes Tim Adams, Tommy Herschel and Steve Ramsay to talk leadership, mental health, resilience and the role men play in shaping emotionally safe homes, workplaces, families and communities. Mark Mathews shared some of his lessons about Courage; Resilience; Managing fear; Leadership and Performing under pressure. An attitude of gratitude beamed through lived experiences, creating one of the most talked about events of the year to support Heal.ed Tribe – a local charity that delivers support programs for youth.

Words: Ocean Road Editorial Team
Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*























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www.urbbana.com.au







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Paradiso Place
REIMAGINING SURFERS PARADISE

Buyers have flocked to SPG Land's $1.5 billion Paradiso Place as the project begins to take shape as part of a dramatic transformation of the Surfers North precinct. At a special briefing in the project's sales display this week, buyers and proaspective buyers were given a detailed insight into how Paradiso Place is playing a major in reshaping an entire city block. Paradiso Place is now well under construction and will bring residential, retail, hospitality, wellness and leisure together at a scale unmatched on the Gold Coast. The project will be the centrepiece of a massive transformation of the last major development precinct on the Gold Coast known as Surfers North.

Words: Ocean Road Editorial Team
Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*























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Women in Tourism
LEADING WITH PURPOSE

Women in Tourism Gold Coast brought together industry leaders for its August AGM & Networking Breakfast, spotlighting the theme "Leadership with Purpose: Inspiring Change Beyond Business". Women in Tourism Gold Coast hosted its August AGM and Networking Breakfast on Friday, 21 August 2026, welcoming members and guests to voco Gold Coast by IHG at 31 Hamilton Avenue, Surfers Paradise, from 6:30am to 9:00am. The morning combined the organisation's annual general meeting with a networking breakfast, giving attendees the chance to connect over coffee against the backdrop of the Gold Coast skyline before settling in for the event's keynote address.

Words & Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*





















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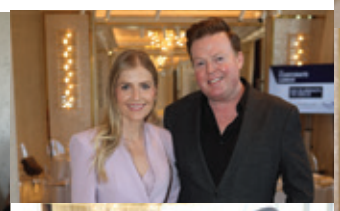
The Corporate Lunch
PRESENTED BY RICHARDSON MURRAY

More than 100 of the Gold Coast's leading business, corporate, media and community professionals gathered at the spectacular Level 18 private event space at The Darling, The Star Gold Coast on Friday for another successful The Corporate Lunch presented by Richardson Murray. The invitation-only event brought together a diverse mix of business owners, executives and decision-makers for an afternoon dedicated to quality networking, exceptional hospitality and genuine conversation in one of the city's most prestigious settings. Unlike traditional corporate events, The Corporate Lunch was designed to focus on meaningful connections rather than lengthy formalities, with guests enjoying a premium three-course lunch and luxury beverage package while expanding their professional networks in a relaxed and sophisticated atmosphere.

Words: Andrew Meadowcroft
Photography: Brian Usher *www.usherusher.com*













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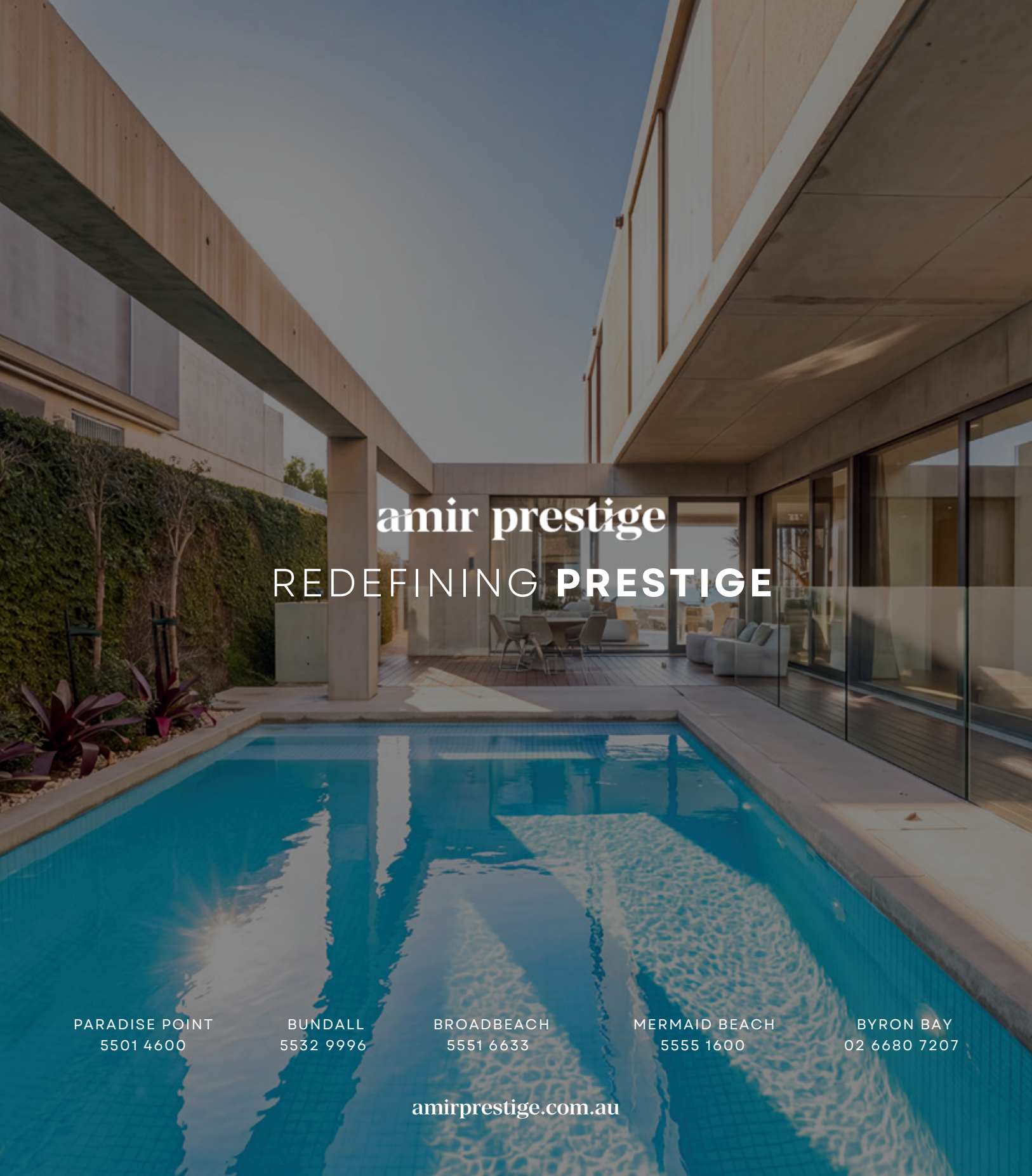

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