



# COAST

STAY, PLAY, EAT, DRINK, EXPLORE THE CENTRAL COAST

SUMMER 2023/24

A SUMMER OF 'WHAT TO DO' ON THE COAST / ADORABLE GUIDE DOG PUPPIES IN TRAINING  
LOVING LOCAL: CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE / NEW EATERIES FOR A SUMMER OF TASTE SENSATIONS



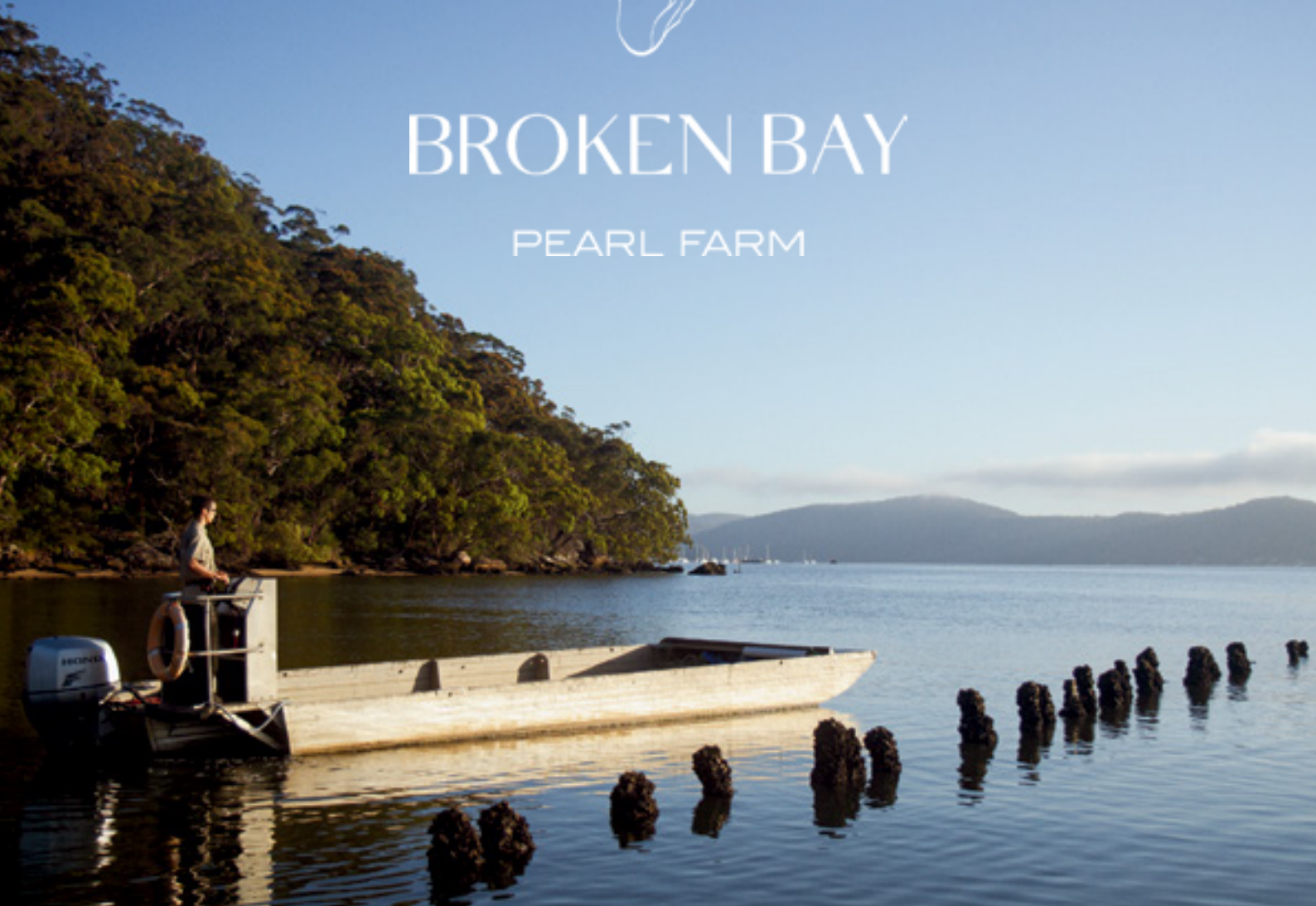






# BROKEN BAY

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# CENTRAL COAST

LEAGUES CLUB

*escape the ordinary.*

Central Coast's premier lifestyle, entertainment & dining destination for 70 years





© JENNIFER ENNION

# Welcome

We love the face of summer on the Coast (son of one of our COAST team)!

Is it coincidence, serendipity or happy planning that the first cover for COAST magazine five years ago featured beautiful, sculptured beach textures photographed by Richard Stanley and that our Summer cover, the first after our milestone fifth anniversary, is again by Richard Stanley. It takes another look – albeit a very different one – at how the sea and sand sculpt our beaches.

We also took the occasion of our anniversary to revamp the look of COAST a little, to keep it up-to-date and interesting. I hope you like it. A shout out to our award-winning graphic designer, Jude Rowe, who I've been working with on books and magazines for 20 years. As well as being a lovely person, her talents make my job a joy and I know so many of you have commented on her beautiful pages.

And in giving a shout out to our wonderful staff, our very own distribution whizz, Alex Tkachenko, was feted by her fellow Kokoda Track trekkers (seven of whom live on the Central Coast and at Lake Mac) as the hero of their recent epic hike. You can read of their endless ups and downs (literally), in this issue.

While planning our Summer issue, we also came across a story about a training centre on the Coast that tugged at our heartstrings. It's about the people who become carers for trainee Guide Dog puppies. I've always thought my next dog would be a rescue dog, but now I'm convinced that I'll apply to become a relief carer when these amazing puppy carers need a break to go on holidays or into hospital, or whatever wrenches them away from their puppy love. And the big bonus is that you get to take your trainee pup wherever you want to – on transport, in shopping centres, cafés – it's all part of their socialisation training. So, if you see anyone hugging a copy of their COAST magazine this summer, you'll know which article they're reading!

'Tis the season for new eateries to open, so we've been spoilt for choice in bringing you the latest cafés and restaurants that have opened on our shores. Looking for even more things to do on the Coast over the holiday months? We've lots of suggestions for you, from getting your feet wet, to soaking your senses in amazing new art.

Enjoy.

*Catharine Retter*

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*We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Awabakal and Darkinjung peoples and their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land.*



ON THE COVER  
MacMasters Beach by R A Stanley.





# How well do you hear?

## Enjoy your summer with better hearing

When it comes to your hearing health, it's important to find your local independent audiology clinic. On the Central Coast, Focus Hearing has been helping locals hear at their best for 10 years. Our trusted, accredited audiologists provide tailored, individual solutions that cater to your unique hearing needs.

Located in Erina, Focus Hearing is an Australian, family owned and run clinic offering comprehensive adult hearing tests, hearing aids, and ear wax removal services. We offer the latest hearing aid technology from all major manufacturers, with styles and technology levels to suit your lifestyle in different environments.

In terms of hearing aid options, we provide everything from **FREE** hearing aids to eligible pensioners, up to state-of-the-art hearing aid technology for those wanting only the very best. With fully rechargeable options and Bluetooth capability, our range of hearing aids offers comfort, discretion, and user-friendly functionality.

We pride ourselves on providing an unbeatable customer experience that goes beyond great pricing. Our audiologists specialise in industry gold standard fitting protocols to guarantee best hearing outcomes.

When you choose Focus Hearing, you can trust that our team will be by your side throughout your hearing journey. Our comprehensive fitting process and all inclusive post-fitting program ensure that your hearing is consistently optimised, offering you a professional and reassuring experience.



**KRIS ROBINSON**


Kris is the director and principal audiologist at Focus Hearing, with 25 years' experience working in audiology private practice.

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**Focus Hearing is a independent hearing care clinic that has been serving the Central Coast region for 10 years.**

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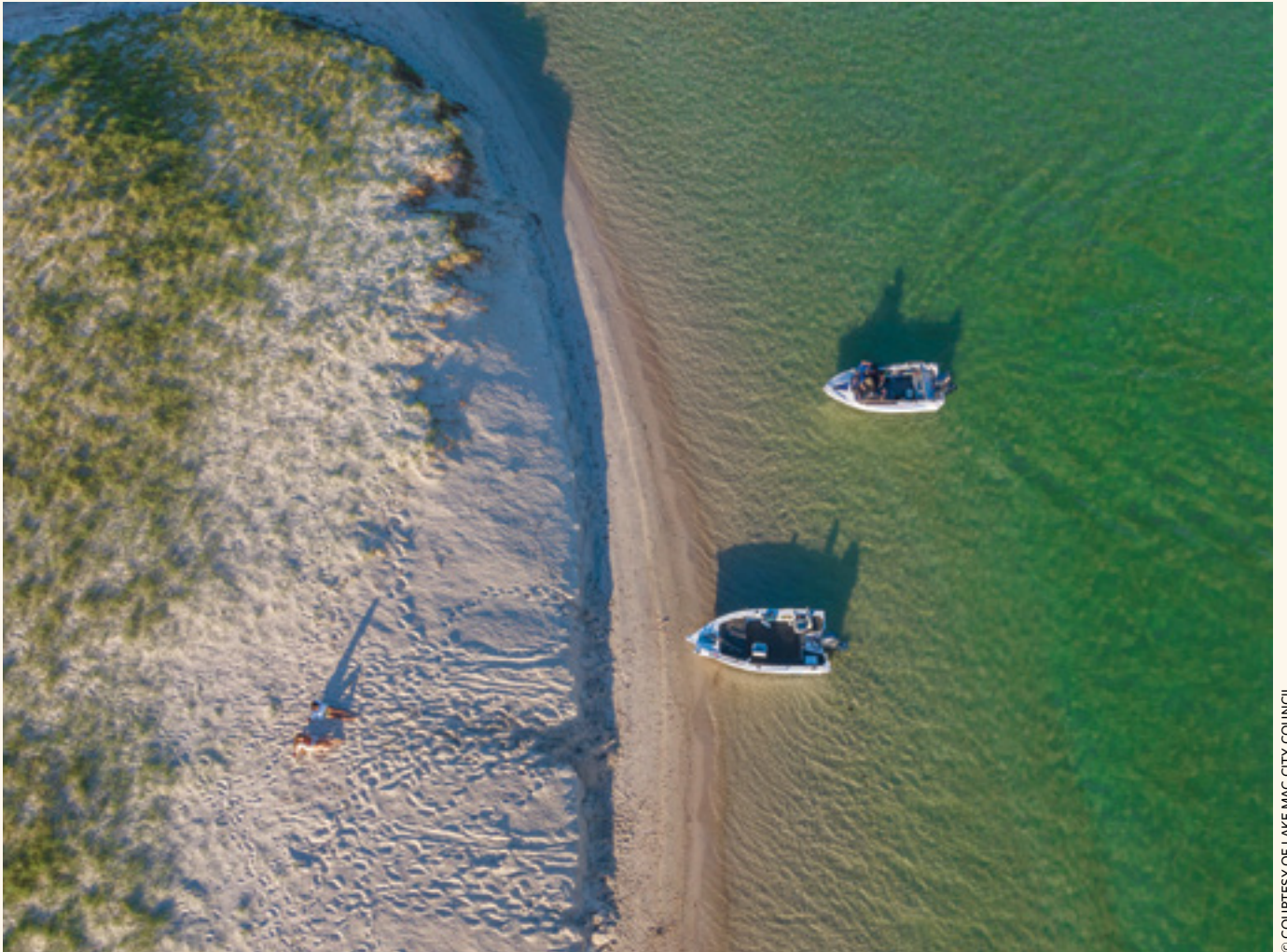
# CENTRAL COAST AND LAKES

## Villages & Beaches





# DISCOVER THE COAST & LAKES



© COURTESY OF LAKE MAC CITY COUNCIL

## GENTLE BEACHES AND BAYS OF THE CENTRAL COAST AND LAKE MAC

WORDS JENNIFER ENNION

We may have some of the best surf breaks in New South Wales, but the Central Coast and Lake Macquarie also have plenty of swim spots for when the swell's not working, and for those who prefer a gentler dip. This summer, let us take you on a tour of some of the region's beaches and bays where kids can learn to snorkel, fishers can seek solitude, and boaties can cast their anchors for a peaceful day on the water. ►►

## DISCOVER THE COAST & LAKES

Lobster Beach



### Lobster Beach

One of the Central Coast's hidden gems is Lobster Beach, near the suburb of Pretty Beach. Parking can be tricky but once you nab a street spot, follow Flannel Flower Walking Track in Bouddi National Park to this quiet cove. Backed by bush, this is the kind of place where you spend a morning, meandering down to the sand, swimming in the calm water and enjoying a picnic on the beach.

**STOP BY...** The Fat Goose at nearby Killcare to pick up chocolate croissants, muffins and sourdough for your picnic.

### Hardys Bay

With tinnies stacked along the foreshore and laidback fishing village vibes, Hardys Bay is another top spot on the Bouddi Peninsula. Fish off one of the old timber wharves, putt around pelicans as you explore the neighbourhood, or hire a kayak or stand-up paddleboard from Killcare Marina. There are even barbecue pontoons if you want to make a day of it with friends.

**STOP BY...** Old Killcare Store (Hardy's Bistro) to cool down with an iced tea.

Hardys Bay



Patonga Beach



### Patonga Beach

At the mouth of Broken Bay is Patonga, a village at the southern end of the Central Coast. Here, you will find a sleepy suburb where days are marked by the ferries that deliver tourists from Sydney's Northern Beaches. Many come for lunch at The Boathouse Hotel Patonga, but it's worth bringing your togs and towel for a lazy swim in the bay. There is also a hidden campground, perfectly positioned for a kayak or SUP down Patonga Creek.

**STOP BY...** The Boathouse Hotel for barramundi and mussels, or grab some fish and chips from the kiosk and eat it across the road on the beach.

### Ettalong Beach

This is a great pick for a day out with the kids, with its shallow, calm waters and long stretch of sand. Splash out to the sandbanks, watch the ferries and windsurfers or just laze the day away.

**STOP BY...** The Box on the Water Kiosk for coffee, green juices and yummy wraps.



Ettalong Beach



Image Credit Natalya Zaritskaya

# Turn your trip away into a forever stay

## Fallen in love with the Central Coast?

If you're ready for a sea change and need help finding the perfect property, the team at Bryson Buyers Agents can help.



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The Haven



Norah Head Beach

### The Haven

There's a reason tourists and locals have a soft spot for The Haven; this corner of Terrigal offers an often sheltered beach experience away from the hubbub of the town centre. Scuba dive operators introduce their students to the underwater world here as it's accessible and safe, fishers cast their lines off the rocks, and kayakers and paddleboarders cruise around the moored boats for morning exercise.

**STOP BY...** **The Haven Beach Kiosk** for a post-swim coffee, smoothie or the best prawns and chips.

### Blue Lagoon

This small cove is a firm favourite of locals because it's generally quieter than some of the region's main tourist beaches and yet it's easy to reach and caters to a range of watermen and women. Occasionally, you'll find a small surfable wave, but mostly you want to come here for a swim and snorkel. Kids will love beachcombing in the corner and wandering onto the rock platform at low tide. Because of the crescent shape of this bay, you may find marine debris washed ashore after a big swell, so be sure to take a cloth bag with you and #Take3fortheSea.

**STOP BY...** **Bateau Beach Cafe** for a poke bowl or halloumi wrap for lunch.

### Norah Head Beach

The highlight of this stretch of coastline is undoubtedly Cabbage Tree Harbour, where a toddler-friendly rock pool attracts a huddle of young families every summer thanks to its shallow aqua water and

snorkelling appeal. But that's not the only reason you should visit. There is a boat ramp around the corner, and the northern end of the beach offers a great spot for swimming. It's worth going for a wander south, where you'll spy Norah Head Lighthouse on the clifftop.

**STOP BY...** **Norah Head Beach Haus** for burgers and tacos.

### Naru Beach

Farther north, you'll find peaceful Naru Beach, somewhat of a secret spot on the shores of Lake Mac. The beach is perfect for families and cooling down after a day at work, but if you really want to make the most of a visit, take a paddleboard or kayak so you can explore the small, uninhabited islands nearby. The beach is easy to reach off Pacific Highway, over Swansea Bridge and past Blacksmiths.

**STOP BY...** **The Yoga Place Cafe** in Blacksmiths for a green smoothie.

### Grannies Pool

With a name like this, you can rest assured you're in for a gentle splash (unless your granny is a little wild). According to the helpful Newy with Kids website, this tidal pool was created when water from Swansea Channel rushed through a gap in Blacksmiths Breakwall. It's an ideal place for toddlers to dash in and out of the water in between building sandcastles.

**STOP BY...** **Caves Coastal Bar & Bungalows**. With plenty of seafood on the menu, you can expect sophisticated pub grub.



Naru Beach



Grannies Pool



# Prestige

PROPERTIES

## Meet Adrienn & Her Team.

Passionate about coastal acreage living, Adrienn finds inspiration in the serene beauty of her Matcham property, where she shares a harmonious life with her husband, four children, two adorable dogs, and a flock of cheeky silver-laced Wyandotte chickens.

Beyond her idyllic home life, Adrienn Stenner is a seasoned sales professional with over 17 years of experience who has truly mastered the art of managing a fast-paced career while nurturing a fulfilling personal life.

With an unwavering commitment to excellence, Adrienn holds an impeccable track record in selling luxurious homes across the Central Coast. From providing pre-sales advice to organising trades for property preparation and offering guidance on purchasing owners new homes, Adrienn goes above and beyond to care for her clients.

Among her many outstanding qualities, one that stands out is her innate calm demeanour, which effortlessly connects her with buyers, fostering trust and assurance. It comes as no surprise that Adrienn has solidified her position as a leading agent on the Central Coast.

Adrienn has personally negotiated in excess of \$90 million in sales over the last 12 months; with an average selling price of \$2,400,000, the highest average selling price of any agent on the Central Coast.

Adrienn's success is supported by a skilled team, which includes Executive Assistant Kiara and Personal Assistant Daniella, along with a dedicated head office administrative team and an exceptional in-house media unit. Together, they ensure that Team Stenner operates seamlessly, providing clients with unparalleled service and achieving extraordinary results for their clients.



Daniella Szakacs. Adrienn Stenner. Kiara Fardnava.

Prestige  
PROPERTIES

Adrienn Stenner 0414 729 453  
adrienn@prestigeproperties.com.au





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# A SUMMER OF...

*eco-friendly and nature experiences*

See summer in at The Entrance with **Pelican Time**, the Coast's newest eco-friendly experience offering expert insight into one of the region's iconic birds, the pelican. Get out on the water with ECO Certified **Terrigal Ocean Tours**, who operate Summer Fun Tours from November to April, and Whale Watching Tours from May to November. Keep your eyes peeled for wild seals sunbathing with their colony at Broken Bay. Or head out on a luxury yacht from Hardy's Bay with **Sail Central Coast**, with a variety of options from a three-hour sunset cruise to a three-day Explore package around Brisbane Waters. Or hire a self-drive motorboat, stand-up paddle board, canoe or kayak from **The Entrance Boatshed** near The Entrance Bridge, or **Andersons Boatshed** at Booker Bay. Andersons also offer popular BBQ Boat Hire for up to 12 people.



Pelican Time



The Entrance Boatshed

© JAMES VODICKA

Bouddi National Park



© KEIRA TRAINOR

There are some hungry farm friends waiting in the hinterland at ECO Certified **Iris Lodge Alpacas**, where you can enjoy breakfast and meet and feed the animals; or venture to **Meliora Farm** in Peats Ridge to Pick Your Own fresh avocados and citrus. Showcasing the sheer beauty of the region's certified ECO Destination, the Coast's national parks and nature reserves let you explore lush rainforest to rugged sandstone to tranquil waterfalls. The Coast Walking Track in southern **Wyrrabalong National Park** takes you through scenic coastal scrub to Crackneck Lookout; view some of Australia's best coastal scenery along the 8 km Bouddi Coastal Walk in **Bouddi National Park**; or explore forest and falls in dog-friendly **Strickland State Forest**.

To explore more Central Coast summer ready experiences, visit [lovecentralcoast.com/nature-experiences](http://lovecentralcoast.com/nature-experiences)



# LOVING *Local*

## CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE



### THE WEEKEND STORE

For a vegan-friendly, cruelty-free gift that's made in Australia, the Elemental Trio is the perfect gift for hard working hands. \$50 (valued at \$82) incl Tuberose & Grapefruit Hydrating Hand Wash 500ml / Lavender & Mandarin Hand & Cuticle Cream 100ml / Cotton Wash Cloth.



### THE WEEKEND STORE

The Perfume Oil Company's roll-on perfumes are crafted in Australia from premium natural ingredients and essential oils. A natural and chemical-free alternative in an array of scents from fruity and floral to oriental and woody. Especially suitable for sensitive skin. Conveniently sized for travel, they draw inspiration from renowned fragrances such as Gucci 'Bloom,' Marc Jacobs 'Daisy,' Byredo 'Gypsy Water,' Dior 'J'adore,' and Le Labo 'Santal 33'. 10ml roll-on perfumes, \$39.95.

### BOYDITA FLOWERS DELIVERED

This Hamper pack is the Ultimate Pure Indulgence for that special someone. Go on, spoil them, they are worth it. Packaged together in a beautiful (re-usable) woven basket, the hamper includes: Lindt Prestige Chocolates - Bottle of Freixenet Prosecco - Bramble and Hedge Nougat - Aromatherapy Co Lotion - Mrs Darcy Candle - Posy of Florist Choice Flowers. Plenty more gift ideas in store. Package \$295



### BROKEN BAY PEARLS

Our local Broken Bay Pearl Farm has been growing some of the finest pearls in the world for over two decades right here on the Central Coast. Visit their pop-up store at Erina Fair for unique, locally sourced gifts that will last a lifetime and radiate the beauty of the sea. >>

# CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE cont.



**KEL K STYLING**

Purchase a gift voucher for the beautiful and versatile tulle skirt. **\$99.95**, buy online.



**BLOOMFIELD FINE ART GALLERY**

- a. Mr Bob Australian made wooden puzzles **\$99-\$139**.
- b. Selection of cotton tea towels by artist Cheryl Bruce **\$31.25** each.
- c. 'Whale Song' by Simon Treseder, reclaimed metals and stainless steel, **\$2,400**.
- d. 'Blue bird totem' by Shellie Christian, ceramic and driftwood, **\$1,580**.
- e. 'Natures Whimsy 9' by Shellie Christian, functional ceramic vase, **\$385**.

**COASTAL DESIGN FURNITURE**

Transform your home into a coastal oasis with the exquisite selection of furniture and homewares. Beautifully crafted pieces, from nautical-inspired accents to breezy, contemporary furniture that captures the essence of coastal living. Make this Christmas a celebration of coastal elegance and style



**SUZU**

Dive into the embrace of eco-luxury swimwear, where modern elegance blends seamlessly with sustainability and unmatched opulence. NASH Tie-Back One-Piece in Ebony. **\$289**.



**GODDESS BY THE SEA**

- a. Bring the allure of the ocean for Christmas with this shell collection of tableware illustrated with seashells, starfish and crabs. Beautiful natural tones for any coastal home.
- b. eb&ive Alma mini board set in sapphire, ivory and green. **\$49.95**



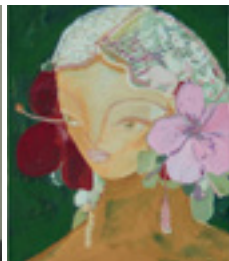
**PURE BULK FOODS**

Indulge in the joy of giving this Christmas with Pure Bulk Foods' organic baking in a jar in an assortment of delectable treats such as brownies, choc chip cookies, shortbread, and more. Their organic delights not only tantalise the taste buds but also embrace a sustainable approach to caring for our planet. More gift ideas in store. ▶▶





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Lakeside Shopping Centre has a fresh new look! Enjoy more casual dining options with Seawave, Norro's Bakehouse, and Phat Chicken now open! Pellegrini's Italian opening soon.

Shopping and relaxing is sorted too with Lakeside Newsagency, TSG, Simply Pharmacy, Hollywood Nails, Cellarbrations and Phone Culture.

Interested in expanding or opening a new store?  
Call Jonathan Wilmot 0438 300 815

## LAKESIDE SHOPPING CENTRE

Cnr The Entrance Road and Denning Street, The Entrance NSW 2261  
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### SALTY ART BY MIA

Whimsical naturalist scenes with 3D detail, producing an 'Alice In Wonderland' view on reality. This Central Coast watercolour artist takes inspiration from the Outback and coastlines.

All artworks are original work. Bespoke commissions, watercolour workshops including Paint & Sip and kids classes are all experiences available within the studio gallery, as well as the artist's own range of custom gifts and homewares.



### DRIFT HOME AND LIVING

A Beach Lounger handcrafted by skilled artisans from organic and sustainable rattan. The perfect fold-up summer piece for picnics, beachside or poolside.

Made from high quality bamboo, rattan and metal hinges, a built-in headrest, two seat-back positions.

Total Dimensions: 110cm long x 46cm wide. \$269



### ERINA FAIR

The perfect gift that says it all for the person who has everything: an Erina Fair Gift Card redeemable at all stores in the centre that accept eftpos.

In any amount between \$5 and \$250 if purchased online, and between \$5 and \$1,000 if purchased in-centre from the self-serve kiosk or the Customer Service Desk. Valid for 3 years from the date of issue.

### OLDFIELD CELLARS

Embodying classic service and modern indulgence, Oldfield Cellars stocks all your Christmas craft beers, boutique wines and unique spirits, along with gastronomic delights like oysters, hot sauces, cheeses and deli meats. With a 4.8 Google rating, it's a reminder that timeless values and personalised service still shine.



The Weekend Store: 168 Avoca Dr, Avoca Beach [theweekendstore.com](http://theweekendstore.com)  
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Suzu: online [@suzu.ltd](https://www.instagram.com/suzu.ltd)  
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Erina Fair: Terrigal Dr, Erina [@erinafair](https://www.instagram.com/erinafair)  
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Oldfield Cellars: 57 Central Coast Hwy, West Gosford [oldfieldcellars.com.au](http://oldfieldcellars.com.au)



# CRANGAN BAY

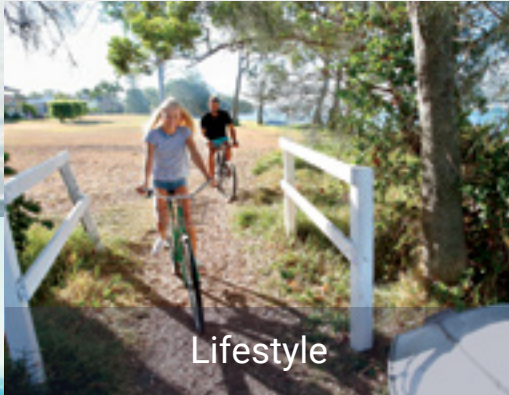
central coast




*Wish you  
were here*



Location



Lifestyle



Community

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*Dream Home?*

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or visit [www.cranganbay.com.au](http://www.cranganbay.com.au)



# CRANGAN BAY

*A sense of community, in an environment that breathes 'nature and lifestyle'.*

WORDS MEGAN ARKINSTALL

The Central Coast's newest residential oasis is nature-based living at its best, offering the ultimate lakeside change with a contemporary lifestyle. Neighbouring the suburbs of Gwandalan and Summerland Point and a 15-minute drive from the seaside enclave of Swansea, Crangan Bay boasts a premium location on one-kilometre of lakefront, nestled among parklands, national park and tranquil Lake Macquarie just a stone's throw away.

Crangan Bay is residential living that integrates the natural environment into its community, with treelined streetscapes and

sprawling green spaces. An active lifestyle is easy with green spaces that will be a hive of activity with sporting activities, a boardwalk through the lakefront reserve and cycling pathways, as well as fitness areas. Its lakeside location is an idyllic setting for a morning sail or kayak, while a refreshing ocean dip is nearby at pristine beaches such as Catherine Hill Bay or a surf at Caves Beach.

Crangan Bay ticks the boxes for many demographics. Families will enjoy the open spaces and natural playgrounds, semi-retirees will appreciate the escape from the hustle and bustle while being close





enough to shops and cafes, and first home buyers will be thrilled to own a piece of the Central Coast's latest paradise. Lake Macquarie, too, has all the community facilities needed for all lifestyles, such as primary and high schools and a local hospital.

This exciting development comprises 623 lots in a range of sizes up to 880 square metres. Bring your own architect and builder or select a coastal contemporary-designed home from one of Crangan Bay's four display builders: Hunter Homes, Masterton Homes Tullipan Homes and GJ Gardner Homes.

With their third land release now selling, Crangan Bay Estate by Scape Properties might just be the lakeside escape you have been looking for.



# Who's a *good dog!*

WORDS CATHARINE RETTER

Imran gets ready for school each morning. His two mums take him down to the big yellow van that calls for him in front of his home in East Gosford. He's excited to see his fellow classmates and they head off to a full day's schooling and training.

Imran is due to graduate soon (he's been passing his tests with flying colours) but until his graduation and until he's paired with his future companion, nothing is certain. For you see, Imran is a Seeing Eye Dog in training and although he's had around \$50,000 invested in his upbringing and training, his skills and behaviour have to be perfect for a person who is blind or has low vision to be able to totally rely on him.

There are currently 11 Seeing Eye Dog puppies on the Central Coast overseen by Puppy Development Trainer Jess McKenzie, as well as five young adult dogs in later stages of training with instructors Luca Taliana, Mikaela Smith and Shi Lin Tan.

Jen Wicker in Kariong is a puppy carer and her first Seeing Eye Dog puppy is Cricket, now eight months old.

'I wanted a dog but at my stage of life I don't want one that is going to out-live me. So a puppy for a year at a time is the best of both worlds.'

Jen received Cricket at four months and it is her role to socialise him and get him used to a wide range of new situations.

'He's just beginning to understand that when he wears his "Seeing Eye Dog Puppy in Training" jacket that this means "work" and he has to focus. I take him on the train, bus, ferry, in taxis, to cafés, shopping centres and in lifts. But not on an escalator, that's for the professional trainers to teach him when he's a little older.'

Jen ensures he always walks on the left and on a loose lead. 'He stays on the lead when we go for walks so he doesn't get too distracted.'

For Elizabeth Scott and Emma Dunch, young Imran's carers, having a Seeing Eye Dog in training was the ideal answer to their busy lives involved in the arts and as senior executives. 'He's at school every weekday from nine till five, so we have him at night and on weekends. ►►





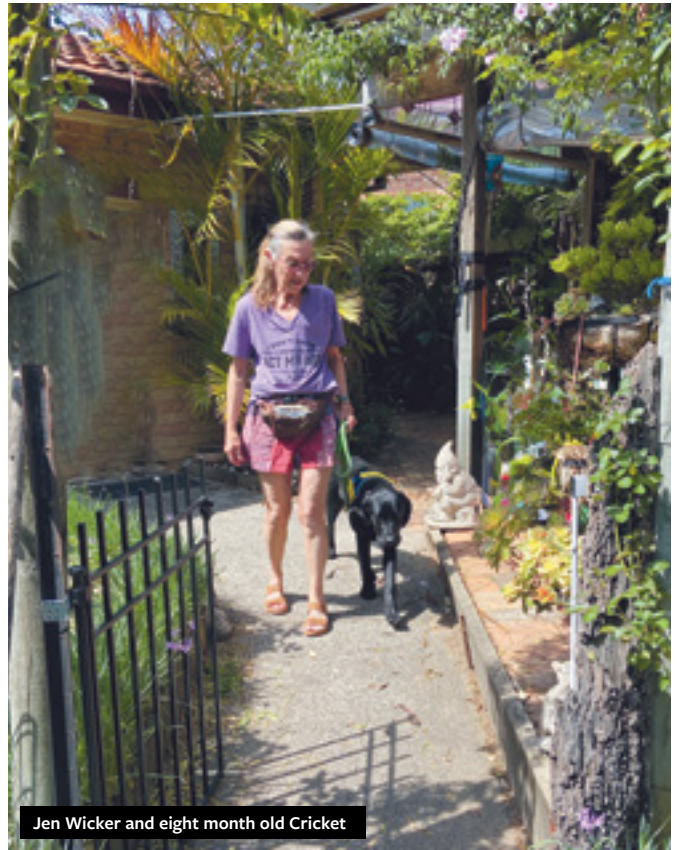


*'We are looking for people who love dogs and can commit to providing a safe and loving home for our puppies. They have support every step of the way, with regular one-on-one and group training sessions and an active community of volunteers.'*





Jess McKenzie and Walker in action



Jen Wicker and eight month old Cricket



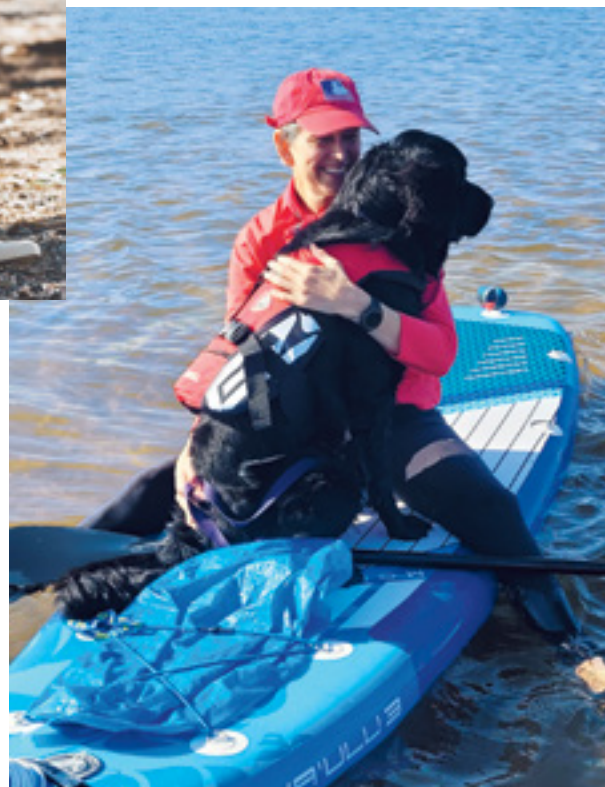
Guide Dog trainers, Abi Howes, Jack Lord and Paige Coleman





**LEFT** Guide Dog trainer, Jack Lord, rewarding a 'Good Dog' after a successful training session.

**BELOW** Elizabeth Scott with Imran on the SUP.



'We walk him in the mornings before school – but nothing too strenuous so he's not too tired for the training sessions.

'Living in an apartment, he's become quite adept at stairs. He needs to "anchor" at the first step to indicate a rise, and again to indicate the last step up. At home, he's chilled-out and relaxed, loves his toy box, and doesn't chew our shoes or the furniture.'

Imran has already had interesting life experiences. He's been to music concerts (his favourite seems to be Renaissance music) and loves to accompany Elizabeth on her stand-up paddle board.

'He has a life vest and I put him on board off the jetty in Caroline Bay,' says Elizabeth. 'His tail doesn't stop wagging.'

Elizabeth recalls taking their first trainee dog, Kasey, to a theatre show.

'We called in advance, so they were prepared for us. We were a bit nervous because we didn't want to risk interrupting the performance but during the First Act Kasey was absolutely quiet. Then the actor on stage had to cry. Kasey was quite distressed and tried to take off to comfort her. I pulled her back and sat her down and gave her a treat. Luckily, the show went on without interruption.'

Unlike the training dog carers, puppy carers do most of the training themselves and are responsible for providing around-the-clock care.

NSW Puppy Development Trainer Jess McKenzie says puppy carers don't need any prior experience.

'We are looking for people who love dogs and can commit to providing a safe and loving home for our puppies. They have support every step of the way, with regular one-on-one and group training sessions and an active community of volunteers.'

'We are always looking for more puppy carers and also relief carers for short-term needs,' says Jess. 'We also need carers for our young dogs, like Imran, that have begun formal Seeing Eye Dog training.'

In return for loving and caring for the dogs, the trainee puppies' food, vet bills, flea and worming treatments, harnesses, crates and bedding are all paid for by donations to Vision Australia. The Petbarn Foundation raised over \$1.3 million this year alone. Royal Canin supply precision nutrition. Zoetis (Simparica Trio) provides the parasite

protection treatments. And Greencross vets provide discounted health checks for the pups. City Farmers, too, raises instore donations.

The pups go through several assessments to determine which are suitable to become working Seeing Eye Dogs. It's the dog-equivalent of graduating from SAS training and not all puppies will successfully graduate. Those who don't may go to equally important roles as service dogs but, for a person who is blind or has low vision, there is no room for error.

The question carers always get asked is, 'How can you give them up?'

Jen Wicker says she will miss Cricket. 'But I know I am going to be fine, and I don't love him any less for knowing he will move on.'

For Elizabeth and Emma, the answer came when they watched online as their second dog, Melvin, graduated in Melbourne.

'We saw Melvin lead the man he'd been matched up with as they went up onto the stage for Melvin to be awarded his graduation certificate, and we felt like we were part of something much bigger. We were so proud and that gave us a form of peace. And we knew we wanted to do it again.' **C**

[sed.visionaustralia.org/puppy-caring](http://sed.visionaustralia.org/puppy-caring)

# EAT & DRINK

## NEW EATERIES ON THE COAST *for a summer of taste sensations*

WORDS MEGAN ARKINSTALL

A WAVE OF NEW EATERIES HAS OPENED UP ACROSS THE COAST, SETTING THE SCENE FOR A BUZZING SUMMER OF RELAXED WATERSIDE BRUNCHES, POST-DIP FISH AND CHIPS AND BALMY NIGHTS SIPPING COCKTAILS.



### **KEFI, Koolewong**

This waterfront venue at Koolewong Marina has been given the Meraki Group Midas touch, with the recently opened Greek restaurant, Kefi. The name, which translates to 'good times' in Greek, is an exciting addition to the restaurant group behind Motel Mezza, Little Miss Mezza, The Pantry and Pinocchio's Wine & Pizza. It has been given a complete makeover with a sun-drenched blue, white and natural timber and cane look to create a Greek holiday island feel and capitalises on the views over the marina's moored yachts and sparkling Brisbane Water. There will also be outdoor dining on the water's edge, so you can indulge in traditional dishes such as keftedes and souvlaki in the sunshine.

[kefikoolewong.com.au](http://kefikoolewong.com.au)





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### PIP AND FRANKIES CAFÉ, Davistown

Who doesn't love an all-day brunch-style menu? This new café at Davistown, which is casting distance from the sparkling water and ferry service, serves soul-nourishing food such as smashed avo, French toast and B&E rolls from open to close. The converted century-old building that once housed the general store has been given a sensitive but refreshing reno, with its white picket fence and cosy vibes still intact. They also provide picnic rugs so on sunny days you can enjoy your fresh fare on the waterfront.

[instagram.com/pipandfrankies](https://www.instagram.com/pipandfrankies)

### STUDIO LANE, Kincumber

The name may be familiar but the venue is spanking new. Studio Lane once served morning elixir to the bleary-eyed people of Erina, but after a short hiatus – and some new owners – it is back at a fresh new space in Kincumber. Adjoining chic co-working and events space Studio Co, this uber-cool hole-in-the-wall café serves coffee and jaffles for a fuss-free feed.

[instagram.com/studio\\_lane](https://www.instagram.com/studio_lane)



The iconic **Crowne Plaza**, Terrigal is set to redefine its dining experience with the opening of its new **Meribella** restaurant.

Michelin-starred head chef, **Joshua Mason** returns to the Coast to bring a new era of sophisticated dining to Meribella's light-filled conservatory against a vista of ocean views. The re-imagined dining area features high ceilings, arches and restored marble, coupled with striking textures and natural tones.

The new menu takes full advantage of Meribella's seaside proximity as well as taking its cue from Joshua's internationally acclaimed European experiences. Supported by a passionate and talented local team, the wine list will feature eclectic choices and legendary cocktails.







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**LAGUNE ARTISAN PIZZA CO, Wamberal**

So large is the cult following of this Neapolitan pizzeria in Wamberal that it has thrown open the doors of a second venue just down the road. Lagune is much-loved by locals for its authentic woodfired pizzas, moreish pastas and antipasti and now we can get our fix for breakfast and lunch too. Located near Wamberal Surf Club, its new location serves coffee, pastries and freshly baked focaccias, while its premium pizzas are on the menu for dinner. The original venue is dedicated to takeaway.

[lagune.com.au](http://lagune.com.au)



© TIM BRAND



© TIM BRAND

**AMALFI, Pearl Beach**

Seek out *la dolce vita* at this new absolute-beachfront restaurant and bar at Pearl Beach. This iconic venue (formerly Pearls on the Beach) has been reimagined into a relaxed restaurant and beach bar. With a bright and airy white-on-white aesthetic, combined with splashes of lemon, the indoor space is comfy for year-round dining while the alfresco deck is perfect for summer sips under its yellow and white-striped umbrellas. Designed to be shared in great company, the modern Italian menu features antipasti, pasta and fresh seafood. Enjoy with an Aperol spritz to the gentle soundtrack of the waves lapping the shore a few sandy footsteps away.

[amalfipearlbeach.com.au](http://amalfipearlbeach.com.au)

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**MAEW MAEW, Terrigal**

Climb the stairs at this beachside venue to find kitsch Asian eatery Maew Maew, a blushing pink and aqua-hued space, styled with a clash of neon and delicate floral-shaped lights, inspired by Southeast Asia's shophouses. Maew Maew (which means 'cat' in Thai) is Terrigal's newest bar/restaurant, from the people behind beloved local diner Thaiger Temple. Serving Asian eats with funky beats, this is the place to come for some 'late night noodles'.

[maewmaew.com.au](http://maewmaew.com.au)



**OAKBERRY AÇAÍ, Terrigal**

Nothing beats a fresh, frosty bowl of Açaí on a hot summer's day. Sourced from the Amazon region in Brazil, from the native açai palm tree, this frozen berry is considered a superfruit. Oakberry's version is found all over the world – and now counts Terrigal as its latest store. Top your bowl with an array of fruit, sprinkle with nuts and seeds, and add crunch with granola for the perfect beachside snack.

[oakberry.com.au](http://oakberry.com.au)



**THE SWORDFISH CO, Budgewoi**

Nothing beats fish and chips by the water on a warm summer's day, and this newbie by Budgewoi Creek is slinging all the classics. The menu features your choice of catch battered or grilled, chunky chips, potato scallops and pineapple fritters, as well as burgers and salads. The Swordfish Co is both a takeaway spot and offers alfresco dining, serving beer, wine and gelato to top off a chilled-out sun-drenched lunch.

[theswordfishco.com.au](http://theswordfishco.com.au)





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# A SUMMER OF...

*eat, drink and being happy*



## *Refined dining*

Perched high on the hills of Terrigal with views to die for and a refined menu is **The Cowrie**. When it comes to the more relaxed yet sophisticated dining, **Yellowtail** in Terrigal is a winner with its modern Australian degustation with a seafood focus. Another ocean-inspired menu is available at **Avoca Beach House** where the modern coastal décor and ocean views promise a special occasion.

**The Wildflower Bar and Dining** at Bells of Killcare offers an elegant menu created with produce from the kitchen garden and inspired by the 'food of the sun' from the Mediterranean and Morocco. Another impressive name in the culinary world, hatted Nicola Coccia, opened **Osteria Il Coccia** in Ettalong, where its northern Italian menu is cooked over fire in a charcoal oven.

In Wamberal, another menu bursting with global flavours from the Med to Asia is found at the cosy and elegant **Suq Restaurant**. Meanwhile classic French restaurant **L'isle de France** is an award-winning venue with views of Terrigal Beach. Step into an Italian trattoria in Budegowi at **Lago Cucina** and be treated to fine Italian cuisine by the lake. In Ettalong, **Safran** is a quiet achiever awarded for its contemporary Turkish cuisine.

## *Casual eats*

What's more casual and comforting than some fish and chips or a meat pie? **Woy Woy Fisherman's Wharf** is an iconic restaurant serving oysters, lobster, calamari, classic fish and chips and more. And inspired by a traditional bakehouse and perched just off the M1, **award-winning Heatherbraes Pies** at Ourimbah serves a heart-warming pie menu to calm the hanger.

If woodfired pizza is what you're craving, **Sorrento Pizzeria** at Empire Bay serves delicious woodfired pizzas inspired by traditional Neapolitan flavours. Or perhaps Asian street food is your fave? Then head to **The Lucky Bee** at Ettalong Beach, a mod-Asian restaurant with uber funky interiors.

**Hart and Soul Bar and Grill** is the newest casual dining at Toukley While in Erina, **Kew Dining** alongside the Ken Duncan Gallery at Erina Heights serves an impressive breakfast to lunch and spectacular High Tea.

In East Gosford, head to **Hernandos Hideaway** for a Mexican-themed meal, while Ettalong's **Nash Restaurant & Bar** offers modern Australian cuisine 'with a twist'. For a feel-good vegetarian meal, **Bamboo Buddha** is a tranquil oasis in Holgate with koi fish ponds, yoga classes and it's pet-friendly, too.







South End Social



Burnt Honey

And as Gosford reinvigorates don't miss the waterfront venue **Drifter's Wharf**, with casual food, cocktails and live music. **Hotel Gosford** is another place to stop by for a drink and a meal at Earl's Kitchen, following the hotel's impressive and extensive refurbishment. The safari themed **Lyons Den** watering hole also serves a range of African inspired eats, while **South End Social** is another top coffee and breakfast lunch spot.

### *Baked and roasted*

Pastries and sweet treats are really having their day. With several stores across the Coast, **Bouffant** isn't any ordinary bakery. Pretty in pink, these good-looking stores boast a delicious (and affordable) menu of croissants, Danishes, Portuguese tarts, bread, pies and more. Doughnut fans will love **Daily Dough Co**, which has stores in both Terrigal and Wyong; the doughnut menu is extensive and they also sell totally indulgent loaded cookies. While boutique bakery and café **Burnt Honey** in Copacabana and Long Jetty, plus **Salt Pig Deli** in Erina both have cult followings for their daily baked breads, pastries and coffee.

When it comes to caffeine fixes, the Long Jetty strip leaves you spoilt for choice, with **Kommuniti**, **Green Tangerine**, **The Morning Coffee Society**, **Belle & Co Coffee House** and **Three Donkeys** all serving up friendly cuppas and delicious brunch and bite menus.

In Toukley, stop by **Blackfinn Espresso** for an early morning sip, loaded B&E rolls and a range of freshly made sweet treats. At **Bar Botanica** in Erina, enjoy an elevenses style lunch or cocktail, and stroll in the beautiful gardens. Open Wednesdays through Sundays with live jazz on weekends.

### *Boutique breweries*

Clearly Coasties love their beer, with seven craft breweries calling the region home. The OG, **Six Strings Brewing**, was our first homegrown craft brewery when it opened in 2012. Head to the taphouse at Erina, where the award-winning beers and ciders are ever-changing, for a pint or a paddle of beers with a burger. Or you can join in on a weekend brewery tour to learn about the brewing process and enjoy a tasting afterwards. Cool down with **Hawkesbury Brewing Co.** award winning pale ales, hazy brews and ginger beers in their taproom in Lisarow. The Coast's newest micro brewer is **Goons Brewing** from Toowoong Bay and their beer has been an instant hit, now stocked all over the Coast. In Gosford, **Bay Rd Brewing** has a light and airy taphouse that's kid- and dog-friendly where you can enjoy a local beer and a feed from one of its weekly changing food trucks vendors. Kincumber's own microbrewery, **Block N Tackle**, has another awesome space for enjoying a pale ale or American IPA. While **Central Coast Brewery** at Tuggerah has a brew-it-yourself operation, where you can choose from more than 170 beers to make yourself. It's personalised, affordable, and fun, and the all-natural beers (no preservatives or chemicals) mean there's less chance of a sore head the next day. Gosford RSL Club owns and operates the **Oak Haven Brewery Co**, pop in to taste their historic crafted beers.

To explore more Central Coast summer ready experiences visit [lovecentralcoast.com/eat-drink](http://lovecentralcoast.com/eat-drink)



Bay Road Brewing



# A walk on the wild side *in the Chef's Garden*

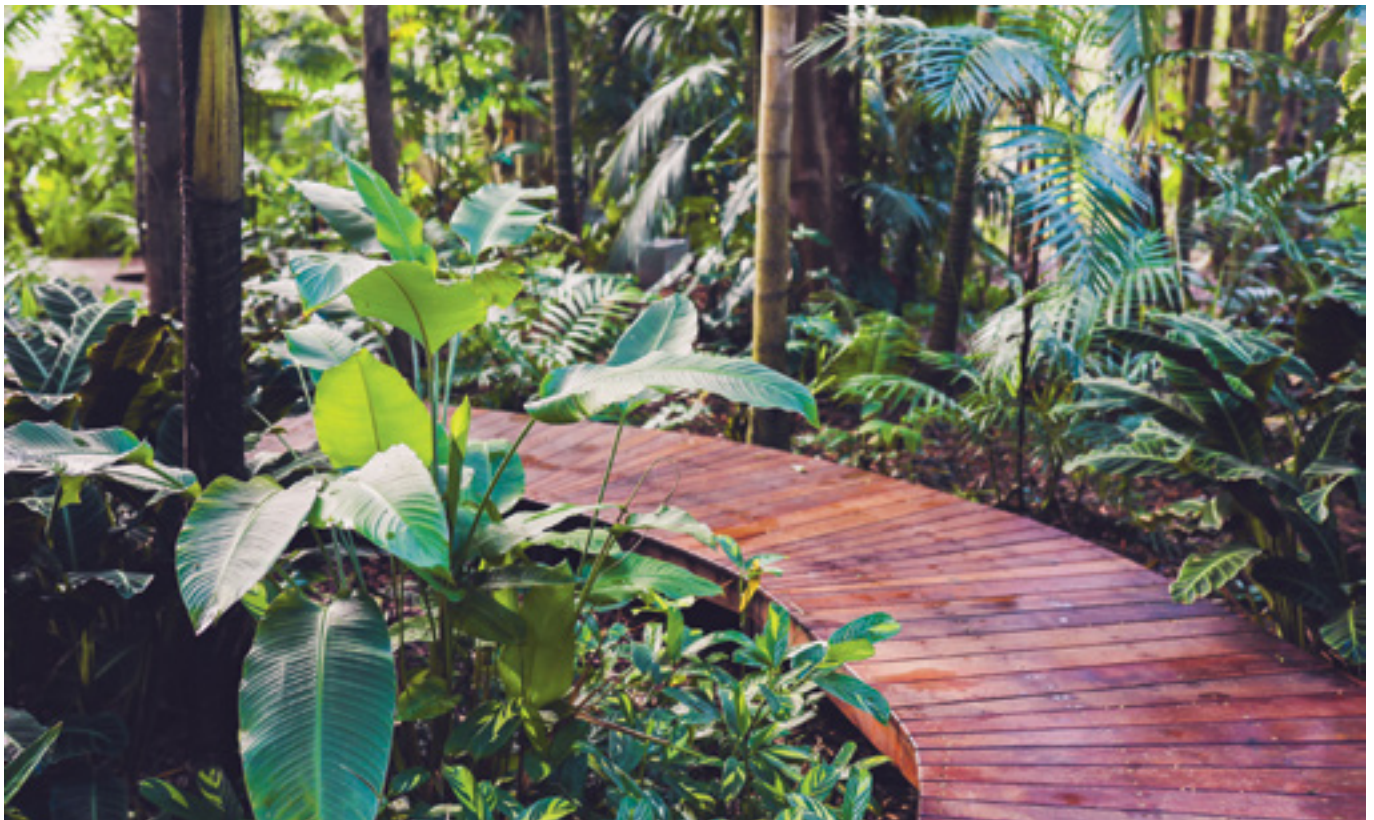
How often do you get the opportunity to walk along a winding boardwalk, through an oasis of lush tropical vegetation in anticipation of enjoying a mouth-watering breakfast, lunch or snack. Or perhaps a favourite tea or barista coffee?

The Chef's Garden café is hidden within the grounds of Impact Plants nursery in a setting enveloped by tall palms and luxuriant foliage. Sit on the deck, nestled amongst the greenery, and the most difficult thing you'll have to do is choose from a mouth-watering breakfast or lunch menu. For pure deliciousness, try the halloumi, cous cous and roasted vege stack. Or for breakfast you can't go past the Chef's Garden Breakfast of scrambled eggs, roast pumpkin and radish, smoked beetroot hummus, chargrilled asparagus, confit tomatoes and garden salsa verde.

Afterwards, wander through the nursery and be inspired to create your own piece of paradise. Talk to one of the nursery staff for expert advice on how to succeed in your garden.

Impact Plants nursery is open seven days, phone 02 4369 1422.

The Chef's Garden is open Wednesday to Sunday, book on-line at [impactplants.com.au](http://impactplants.com.au)  
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To quench a thirst, visit the legendary boutique breweries: **Block 'N Tackle Brewery** in Kincumber, and **Six String Brewing Co.** in Erina. Or if you favour award-winning artisan whisky, visit the **Amber Lane Distillery** in Yarramalong. Set in an acre of gardens at Erina, you'll find gins inspired by herbs and botanicals at **Distillery Botanica**. And in Holgate you'll find the unique fruit and botanical wines of **Firescreek Botanical Winery**.

Start or finish your day at the aptly named, **Legend Coffee and Culture** in West Gosford to experience the roastery in action and the mastery of coffee roasting and cupping.

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# John and Robyn Weigel

The couple who love snakes, birds and a dinosaur.



John and Robyn Weigel

You've heard the saying, that when a butterfly flaps its wings in one corner of the world, it causes a wind to blow at the other end of the world. So it was when a young Colorado university student was expelled from college for keeping too many snakes in his dormitory, after which that same student, John Weigel, decided to move to Australia to pursue his love of reptiles.

And so it was, at the other side of the world, that John met the other love of his life, Robyn, at the Australian Reptile Park and married her. And so it was that John and Robyn ended up buying the Reptile Park from its founder, Eric Worrell several years later.

It is now the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Australian Reptile Park by Eric Worrell, and the 27th year of the Park calling Somersby home.

The year also marks a full circle for John Weigel who recently returned to his Colorado university to be inducted into its Hall of Fame. John was a champion pole vaulter at university in the 1970s until a back injury cut short his budding sporting career. Ironically, one of his pole-vaulting records stood for 49 years until just days before he was due to return to the US for the Hall of Fame ceremony.

John also holds the current birding record in both Australia and in America, that is, he has observed and identified more birds in their natural habitat in a calendar year than anyone else! In the US, in 2019, he identified a record 840 bird species and, in 2000, identified 780 species in Australia.

Back at the Reptile Park, it was the opening of the F1 Freeway, now the M1 Motorway, by-passing the Central Coast, that spelled the death-knell for the Park's location in Gosford and halved visitor numbers to the Park in one fell swoop (to continue a bird metaphor).

Robyn and John made the hard decision to shut down the 38-year-old facility and 'brought Mohammed to the Mountain' by building the new Park three minutes from the M1 in a bushland setting at Somersby. It wouldn't be the Australian Reptile Park without its diplodocus, Ploddy, so she came too, stopping traffic and creating Gosford's biggest parade through its streets as her 26-metre, 100 tonne body made its way slowly to her new home.

Today, the Reptile Park beats with four core areas at its heart: as a tourist attraction; as an education facility; as a conservation centre; and as a life-saving centre through the collection of snake venom (the only such facility in Australia) and spider venom.

John and Robyn are quick to credit the senior management team and in particular, co-owners and directors Tim Faulkner and Liz Gabriel, as well as its very long serving managers (the Reptile Park has won numerous awards not only in tourism, zookeeping and conservation but also as Employer of the Year).

'I know about the care and conservation of reptiles and I know birds and mammals,' John says. 'But I also know what I am not good at in business. And that's why we have these passionate and smart people around us. And that's been at the heart of the Park's success and longevity.' **C**



Ploddy being paraded through Gosford in 1996



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# COAST LIVING

## MEDITERRANEAN *by the beach*

WORDS SHERIDEN RHODES

It was a longing to be closer to the beach that had Jade Pentony scouring the coastline. Jade and her family loved North Avoca, a beachside suburb tucked away between Terrigal and Avoca, but wanted to be down on the flat closer to the water.

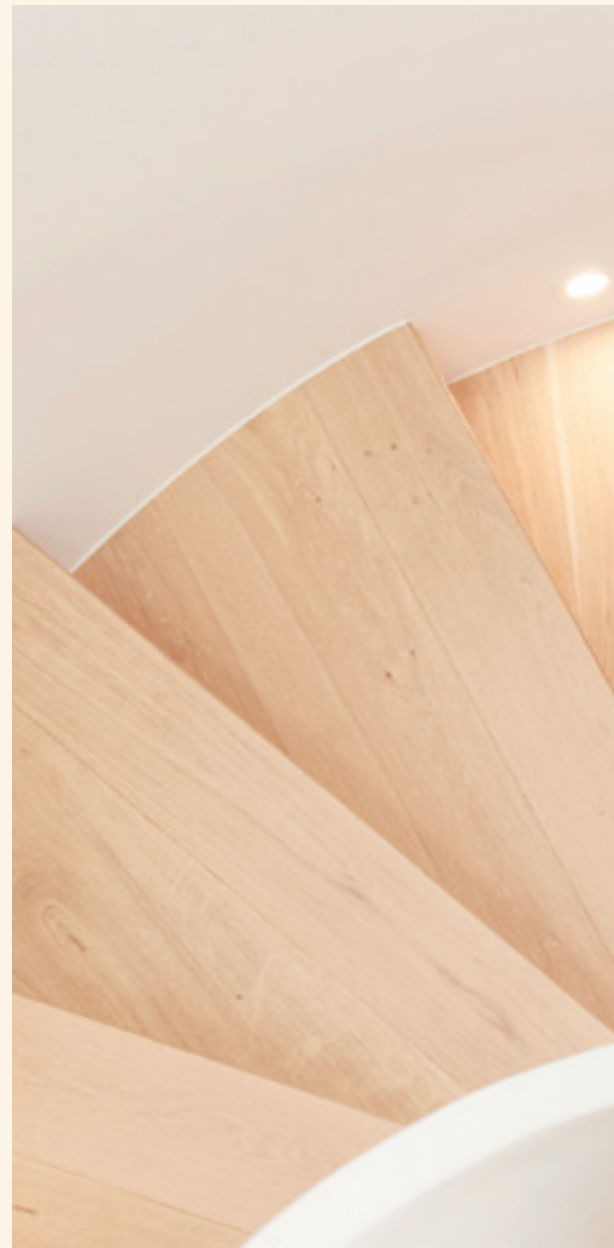
It was a mix of perfect timing and serendipity that delivered the dream location in the tight-knit seaside suburb.

While Jade, founder of Glow Beauty and Crème Skincare, had found the ideal site, the large red, '60s double brick house on it was less than ideal. The family of four moved in and began saving for an exhaustive renovation which would see the old house transformed into a striking Mediterranean-style coastal home.

Only two walls of the original house were kept. 'It's essentially a new build. We wanted a design that was appropriate for the location being so close to the beach,' Jade explains.

Fabric Architecture was engaged for the design, local builder Tom White carried out the 14-month build while interiors are by Xanthe Highfield also of Fabric Architecture. Kara Demmrich (of Kyal and Kara, *The Block* fame) took charge of the jaw-dropping spiral stairs and room finishes.

'We wanted a resort-style feel with a minimal aesthetic; something beautiful and simple where the kids could walk in with sand on their feet and not have to worry.'



© ANDREW COONEY





*'It's essentially a new build.  
We wanted a design that was  
appropriate for the location  
being so close to the beach,'*  
– Jade Pentony –

Helical staircase by Enzie stairs is the  
central showstopper to the home



THIS IMAGE Custom designed banquette seat with playful check upholstery fabric by Australian designer Oat Studio.

BELOW LEFT A seamless transition with concrete surrounding the pool that also leads to the outdoor entertaining area.

BELOW RIGHT A feature in the boys bedroom is the ocean wallpaper by local designer Olive et Oriel.



© ANDREW COONEY



© LUKE BUTTERLY



# The good, the bad and the ugly of buy now, pay later

WORDS LUKE TALBOT

Buy now, pay later. Love this idea. It lets you purchase that to-die-for outfit the minute you lay eyes on it. (You just know it would be gone next week after payday.) And it doesn't seem so expensive if you pay it off over a few pay periods. So convenient. And here comes Christmas. You could just pay off Santa's whole bag of presents in the first months of the new year.

But wait a sec. If you're also paying off your new outfit, and maybe the camera you bought to enhance your inner creative, or the air fryer for healthier eating ...

Retailers and bankers know the psychology behind the popularity of buy now, pay later. It's based on instant gratification, the desire to have something now without having to wait for it. And without the pain of instantly paying for it now, triggering a sense of well-being in the brain.

'But I'm controlling my finances because I'm breaking up the payments,' I hear you say.

It's a great option if you can stick to only one B-N-P-L purchase at a time but the downside of paying later is that impulse buying can lead to multiple purchases and overspending. And you know what that leads to: financial strain when you're paying off these amounts – maybe even impacting your credit rating if you default. Government research says as many as one in five people miss a 'Pay Later' repayment. Schemes may be interest-free, but there are late fees and sometimes monthly account-keeping fees, payment processing fees or even establishment fees.

So, go with 'Save Now, Buy Later'. Or if you do get into trouble, talk to a financial counsellor who can advise you on the best way to manage your debt.

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The circular skylight highlights the rendered curves of the helical staircase.

The four-bedroom, two-bathroom home includes a gyprock and pebblecrete internal courtyard with alfresco shower allowing you to wash away salt and sand straight from the beach. There’s also a large undercover alfresco space overlooking a small pool. ‘We didn’t want something too big that would take up all the yard,’ Jade says.

An entire side wall was demolished allowing light to flood the two-storey home while the piece de resistance – the spiral staircase – sits beneath a circular skylight that connects the downstairs living area to the upstairs space. The staircase was inspired by Karl and Kara who did a similar one in their last build.

A decision was also made to combine two bedrooms into a home office with the option to convert the house to five bedrooms if needed – a home for now rather than something designed for a hypothetical situation down the track.

It was Xanthe who took the lead from start to finish, making everything from paint choices to sketching drawings for suppliers and tradespeople to follow. ‘I simply couldn’t have done it without her.’

Meanwhile, Loughlin Furniture, renowned for their custom timber pieces, handcrafted the kitchen, bar and bathroom timber as well as the statement front door.

For Jade the hardest part of the process was moving out of the home with their two small boys and chocolate labrador during the build and managing the daily complex decisions required.

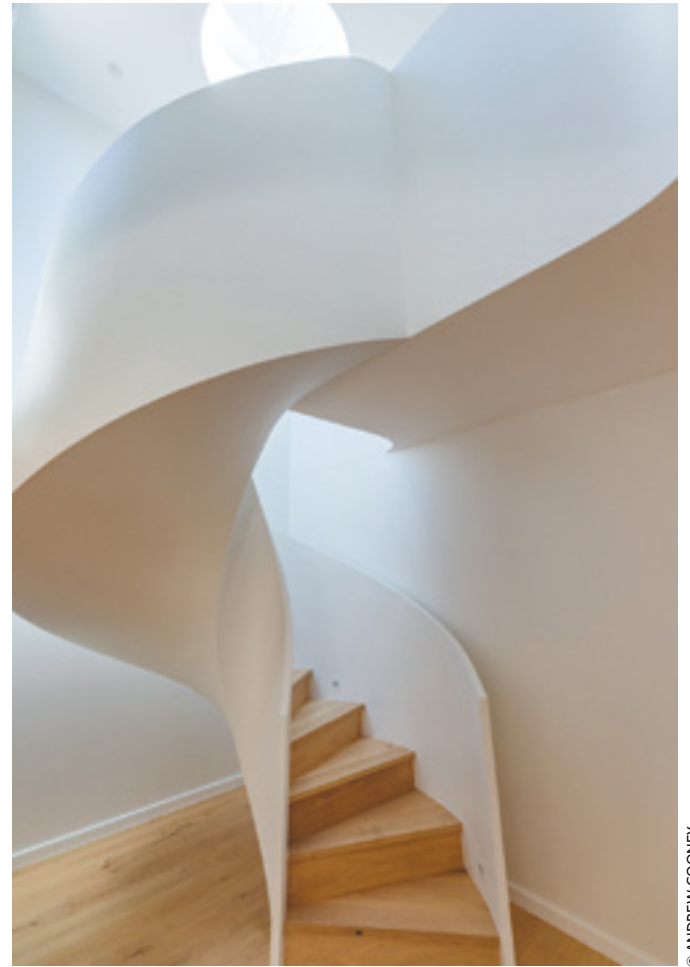
For builder Tom White the spiral staircase was the most challenging, as was achieving a consistent textured render to give the house its Mediterranean style. He said material choices also needed to be extremely hardy being so close to the beach.

‘Doing a large-scale renovation is a lot harder than a knock down rebuild and doesn’t necessarily end up cheaper. But the benefit is you can reuse structural elements and reuse and recycle materials,’ Tom says.

And the most enjoyable part? ‘Choosing the tiles, wallpaper and finishes with Xanthe and Kara,’ Jade says.

‘Xanthe made all the big design choices while Kara did the final styling touches.’

Ensnconced in their coastal home for over 12 months now, Jade said she couldn’t be happier. ‘We most definitely achieved our Mediterranean-style dream home. And we’re doubly lucky that our home is just footsteps from the beach.’ **C**



© ANDREW COONEY

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# DESIGN *matters*

WORDS JENNY DARBIN



## Selecting the right soft furnishings

We all want that warm welcoming feeling walking into our homes after a hard day's work or play. That feeling of comfort and 'I'm home'.

Key elements that transform a house into a home – often overlooked or added as an afterthought – are the home's soft furnishings. They include cushions, rugs, throws, lampshades, tablecloths, curtains, bedlinen, chair and ottoman coverings. They should transform a space into something that is uniquely yours.

And the best thing about soft furnishings is that they can be changed with the seasons, or as your personal style evolves.

## Seasonal

Soft furnishings for the living room can create a light, airy style for summer and can be changed to a warm comfort zone in winter. Try a snuggly, fleece throw over a sofa in winter, and change it to cool cotton accents for summer. The same goes with cushions for the lounge and bedroom: soft linens for the summer months and the heavier velvets and more highly textured wools for the cooler months.

In your outdoor living areas, too, don't under-estimate the impact of soft furnishings. Coordinate or contrast with your garden colours. Sometimes, unexpected choices and highlights can lead to a uniquely beautiful result, transforming your outdoor space from average to wow!

## Colour vs texture

The colours in your soft furnishings can really make the interior of a room. Professional designers know the trick of keeping some soft furnishings in a plain neutral colour to breathe 'air' into the room, allowing the busier or more bold designs to stand out.

Go the opposite way if you have a room with bold patterns: opt for soft furnishings that are more subdued.

Or instantly soften a room that's painted in a shade of white by using linen sheer s-fold curtains. For a fresh coastal look, especially on

a white background, use blues, soft greys and indigo together to bring the feel of the ocean and sky into the room. Carry the upholstery colour of an occasional chair through to the throw cushions on the main sofa for a cohesive look.

Vary the texture of your soft furnishings to create an instant layering effect on a lounge or bed. That gorgeous throw layered with a couple of cushions on your favourite chair makes for a cosy corner.

## How many cushions is too many?

You can never have too many cushions, right? That said, it is a personal preference, so go with whatever is comfortable. A general rule of thumb in the design world is to have an odd number of cushions on a lounge or bed. And mix plain, patterned and textured cushions for a bed, lounge, or window seat.

## Curtains are back in vogue

Curtains have made a comeback and in particular, the s-fold sheer. They are a practical way of giving a room a softer feel and a certain amount of privacy. Use them in a range of colours from whites and neutrals through to bold geometrics and colours.

Most sheers come in a linen or a linen-look, giving texture and a natural tone. For a luxurious and floating look and the illusion of a taller ceiling, let the sheers run from floor to ceiling on a ceiling fixed track.

When deciding on window dressing best suited to your home, consider the use and position of the room. If it faces west, you will need good thermal properties to control the heat in the summer. Whether you want to soften the room as well as protect your furnishings and flooring from sun damage. It is worth spending that little bit extra on quality fabric to get longevity.

Remember, your home is uniquely yours, so choose soft furnishings that reflect your family's lifestyle and personality to create a comfortable and happy space. **C**

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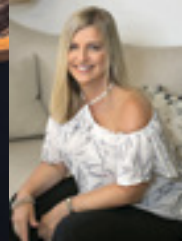
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# MAREE AND TONY DEL CASALE



*Home of inspiration for the home*

There's a place on the Central Coast that interior designers, builders and canny home renovators flock to for inspiration when they're creating bathrooms, kitchens or outdoor living spaces.

Walk into Stone Arc in Kincumber and you won't be overwhelmed with racks of tiles that you need to endlessly flip through to begin to find a tile for your new bathroom. Instead, there's a Colour Wall that shows how this colour and texture tile goes with that. Natural stone, ceramic, porcelain, terracotta tiles in all their guises – large tiles, feature tiles, small round tiles, subway tiles, finger tiles (wonderfully referred to as Kit Kat tiles in the trade) and the latest 3D tiles with raised surface features.

The design genius behind this is Maree Del Casale. She and husband Tony ran a successful business in Surry Hills before moving to the Coast. When asked what prompted the move Tony responds,

'On a personal level, we love the Central Coast lifestyle. And on a business level we saw a huge niche opportunity in the market up here to add design inspiration to help people when choosing tiles and to simplify the whole process.'

The business then evolved very naturally to pair tiles with curtains, outdoor paving, garden pots, lamps and pendants, and soft furnishings to add the finishing touch to living spaces.

The premium tapware company, ABI Interiors, discovered a like-minded approach to their own when they met Tony and Maree. A collaboration was soon formed with Stone Arc becoming ABI's distributor on the Coast for their sought-after architectural bathroom and laundry tapware, basins and baths.

Walk through the Stone Arc store to the Designer Room at the rear and you'll see real-life settings of how tiles look alongside a range of other products. The Designer Room is also frequented by interior

designers who can book the space, free of charge, for client meetings. There, they have ready access to show the latest, ever-changing range of tiles and accessory products.

Maree has always had a passion for design.

'I think I have collected every single design book published,' she confesses. 'Tony and I have renovated and styled houses too, so we understand the process.'

'I love this business and working with Tony. He's the technical expert and is the one who knows the products inside out. He makes it happen and it means the products get delivered on time.'

'And what I love most is seeing a finished room and walking in and hearing myself saying "wow!" at the end result.' **C**

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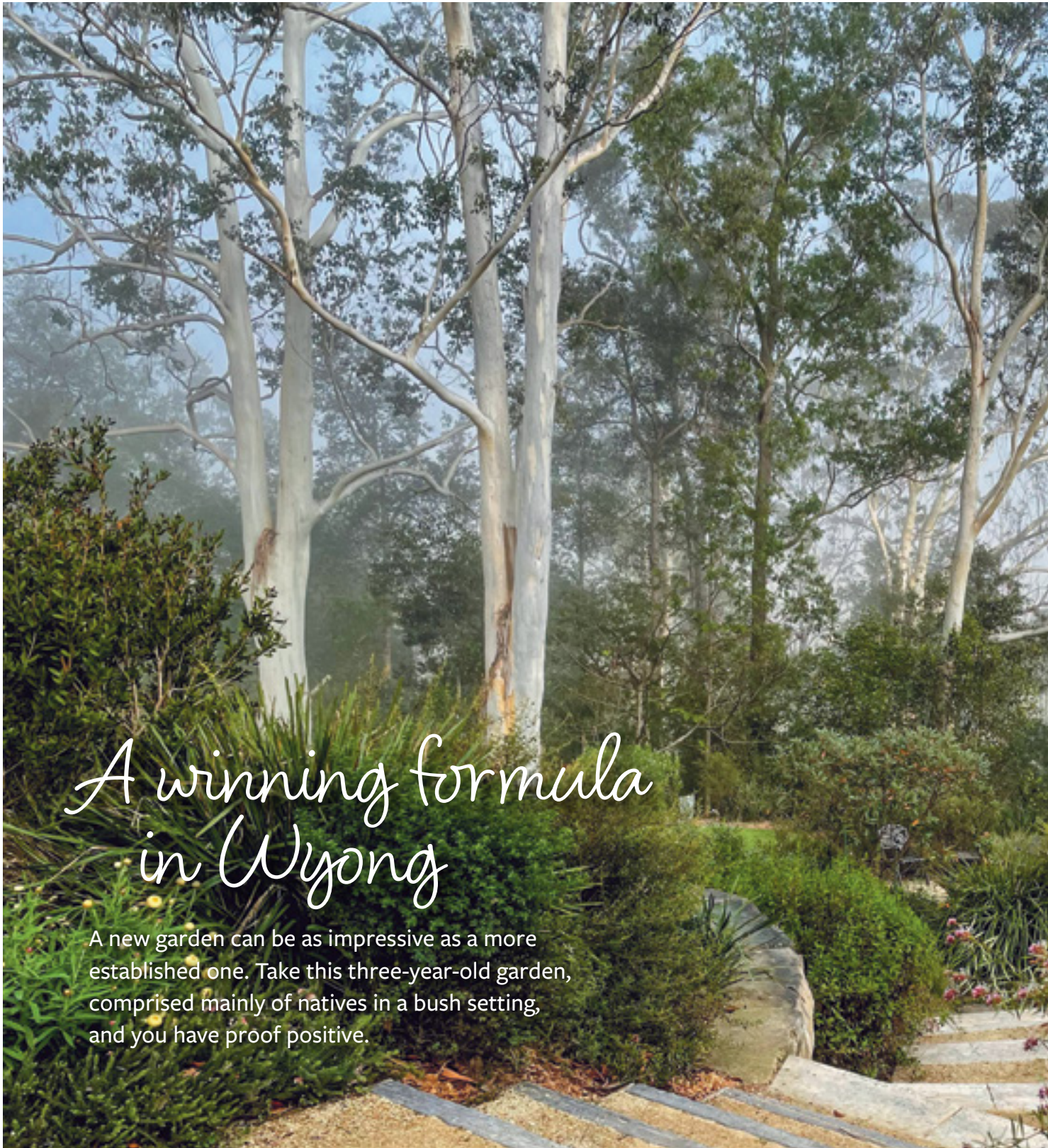
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## *A winning formula in Wyong*

A new garden can be as impressive as a more established one. Take this three-year-old garden, comprised mainly of natives in a bush setting, and you have proof positive.



Early morning mist falls romantically on the landscape.



Native shrubs tie the house to the paths and other hard landscaping

WORDS PAUL URQUHART  
PHOTOS LISA HAYMES

Nestled among 10 hectares of bushland, Tony Meehan's garden has earned the coveted title of Grand Champion at the 2023 Wyong Garden Competition, also securing first prize in the 'Whole Garden over 1000 square metres' category. What's truly amazing is that Tony's garden was only established in 2020 when he and his partner, artist and musician, Karynne Courts, moved to their Wyong Creek property.

Tony's aim was to create a garden that would not only delight the senses but also harmonise with the surrounding forest. It's a labour of love, one planned for his own satisfaction and pleasure and not public accolade. Karynne is a willing encourager who blends her artistic talents with Tony's endeavours in horticulture.

When asked about his initial priorities, Tony says getting the hard landscaping done took centre stage in the early days. Steps and retaining walls were meticulously crafted to give a sense of structure to the garden. Close to the house, areas were zoned so there is a grand chook pavilion, an orchid house and a place for vegetables. These zones are more intensively maintained closer to the house but as you venture further away, the mantra was clear, 'the more natural, the better'.

Tony takes fire safety seriously, clearing space around the orchid house to ensure protection from any bushfires. His commitment to preserving the natural environment is evident. He sourced most of his plants from nurseries like Sustainable Natives and Apunga Native Nursery that specialise in bush regeneration, and he sought advice from Nola Parry at what is now The Wildflower Meadow at Erina (formerly The Wildflower Place).

© TONY MEEHAN







**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Karynne's artistic hand assists Tony's plant combinations, here with pink everlastings and kangaroo paws.

The waterfall looks natural but it's all artifice.

A place to sit and dream is essential. The fire drum expands the useable time in the space.

Garden art, like this echida, adds whimsy.



Soil quality plays a big part. Tony's garden sits atop a mix of sand and shale, which means drainage varies throughout. Some areas are free-draining, while others can have quite heavy soil, all with a clay base underneath. Tony's solution to this challenge is simple yet effective – he's been adding compost by the truckload. Adding organic matter improves water retention but also enriches the soil with organic matter, making it more fertile for new plants.

Tony's garden is a work in progress, constantly evolving and adapting. Some plants may come and go, either due to their limited lifespan or the ever-changing conditions in the garden through rain, drought, frost and heat. But for Tony, that's all part of the joy of gardening – it's a continuous journey of discovery and refinement.

Tony points to his favourites, 'I absolutely adore everlastings and grevilleas,' he says with a gleam in his eye. But he doesn't stop there; his garden boasts lillypillies and mint bushes, all classic native plants that thrive in his local climate.

The diversity of Tony's planting is staggering, ranging from native species to a colourful array of hybrids and a testament to his willingness to experiment and embrace the unpredictable nature of gardening. **C**



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## *Hotels and resorts*

The Central Coast is paradise for salt and sand lovers. Enjoy the ocean from the moment you wake up to the moment the sun goes down with a stay at the iconic **Crowne Plaza Terrigal Pacific**, located in the heart of Terrigal with views of the pine tree-lined esplanade and family-favourite beach, or at **Mantra Ettalong Beach**, which has an unrivalled position looking out to tranquil Broken Bay.

Families and groups are catered for at the luxurious **Avoca Palms Resort**, nestled in the quaint beachside town of Avoca and boasting three- and four-bedroom apartments looking over Avoca Lake or the beach. Perched on a hill between Terrigal Beach and The Skillion, **Star of the Sea Luxury Apartments** has three- to five-bedroom apartments with incredible views. While **Oaks The Entrance Waterfront Suites** is a stone's throw from Tuggerah Lake and has a mix of studios and larger apartments for the whole family, too. Golf lovers can tee off at one of two 18-hole championship golf courses: **Pullman Magenta Shores Resort**, where you can relax afterwards in the serene day spa, or **Mercure Kooindah Waters Golf Resort**, followed by a meal at its award-winning golf club.

The recently transformed **Beachcomber Hotel** at Toukley has been a much-loved local destination for years; its beautifully renovated rooms ooze Hamptons style with waterfront views, while its exclusive beach club, bustling pub-style eatery and fine dining restaurant will give you reasons to linger longer. And the Coast's newest hotel, **The Quarters at Forresters Beach** (formerly Forresters Beach Resort) has been given a fresh coastal-cool makeover; the resort will be a hub for bespoke events, tours and wellness. ▶▶



Crown Plaza Terrigal Pacific

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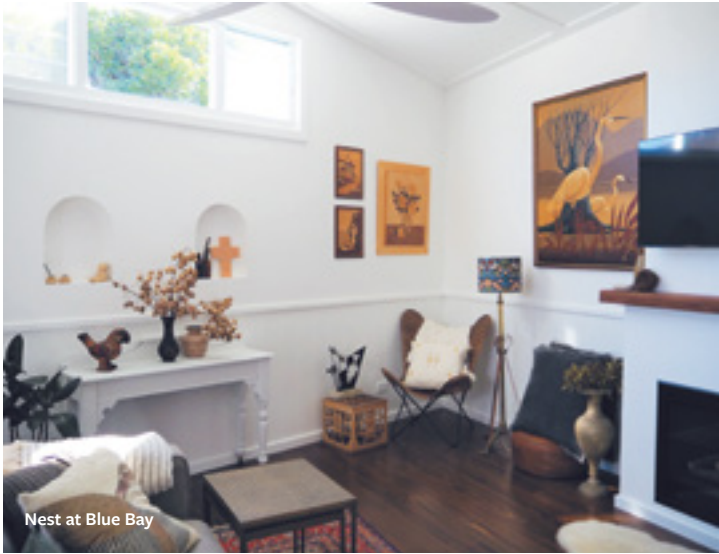
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Nest at Blue Bay

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Groups should check out **The Green House Retreats**, a collection of three luxurious rentals located in Green Point and Pearl Beach, boasting privacy without forgoing five-star-hotel amenities. Set on 50 acres of farmland in Yarramalong Valley, **Lost Ranches** offers rustic accommodation with a barn, cottage and camping. While **Fernbank Farm** at Wyong Creek can accommodate 16 guests in two houses, one heritage, one modern.

### Luxury

A long-standing favourite getaway, **Kim's Beachside Retreat** is a collection of free-standing bungalows just steps from the pristine water of Toowoon Bay.

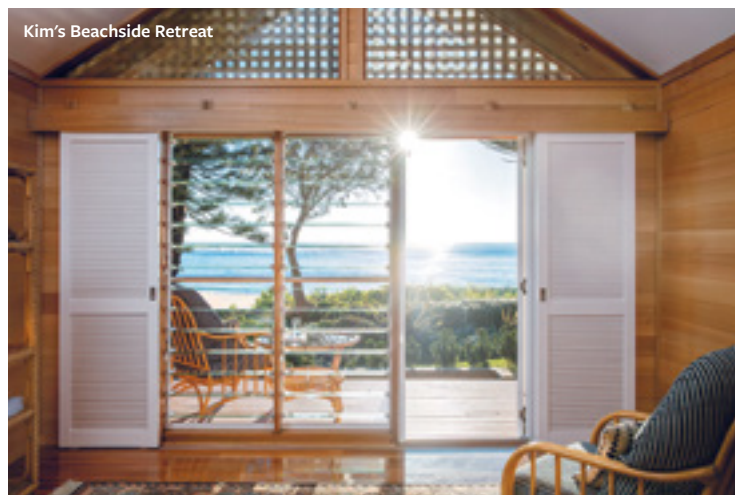
For ultimate luxury, **Pretty Beach House** is located within Bouddi National Park. One of the Luxury Lodges of Australia, this incredible stay is made up of four exclusive pavilions and a private dining room where world-class modern Australian cuisine is served, and offers one-of-a-kind guest experiences.

### Boutique stays

The Coast is home to an endless list of unique and beautiful places to stay. Feel at home within one of two beautiful properties of local legends and style masters, Kyal and Kara Demmrich: **Toowoon Beach House** is a family-friendly holiday home just 150 metres from the lapping waves of Toowoon Bay with ocean-inspired interiors, while **Blue Lagoon Studio** is a Mediterranean-style private studio across the road from Blue Lagoon Beach.

Just down the road within five minutes' stroll of two beaches, **Nest at Blue Bay** is a couples retreat with a gorgeous bohemian style. Another one for the lovers, **The Outlook Cabana** – as the name suggests – has beautiful views, set high on 18 acres in Terrigal. Or for the best of both worlds, **Little Valley Guesthouse** is a farm-style stay nestled within 10 acres of bushland, an easy walk to MacMasters Beach.

**Ahara House** in Killcare is an incredible newly refurbished beachfront holiday home for a wellness inspired getaway it sleeps ten guests and boasts a chic modern design. **Clare De Lune Waterfront** is another spectacular property, a four-bedroom house with a private jetty and swimming pool with water views, in the quiet suburb of Point Clare. ►►





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Big on luxury but smaller in size, the apartments at **The Boathouse Patonga** can sleep from four to six guests and are styled in the signature Boathouse coastal aesthetic. Located above the bustling hotel, with water views and minutes from Patonga Beach, guests will want for nothing.

Four new exquisite lodges have been added to **Bell's at Killcare** luxury boutique accommodation in Killcare. Each with two bedrooms, they nestle quietly into their bushland surrounds with the interior of the lodges bringing the outside in with foliage tones and stone accents. Built over three levels with underfloor heating, an indoor rain-shower and a freestanding bath, they are designed for relaxation and an escape from cares. Step outside to your private pool heated to a constant 24 degrees all year round. Each has well-appointed space for entertaining with a fully equipped contemporary kitchen that leads to an open-plan dining and living area and a fireplace for intimate evenings. On the third level, the Sunset Deck offers sweeping views of Bouddi National Park, Broken Bay, Palm Beach, the Hawkesbury River and to the distant city Sydney skyline.

### *Caravan and camping*

Caravan and camping options sure have come a long way in recent years, and the offering on the Coast ranges from good ol' fashioned camping to upscale glamping with all the bells and whistles. **NRMA Ocean Beach Holiday Resort** delivers it all. Located within steps of family-friendly Umina Beach, this resort has unpowered and tent camping and caravan sites, modern villas and cabins that sleep up to eight, safari-style permanent tents, and the park's newest innovation, 'glamtainers' that sleep up to four, which are decked out in ultra-chic furnishings with a kitchenette, bathroom and deck.

**Central Coast Holiday Parks** have locations at Toowoomb Bay, Norah Head, Budgewoi and Canton Beach and offer a range of cabins and villas, as well as traditional camping and caravan sites. Claiming the only absolute beachfront location on the Coast, **Blue Lagoon Beach Resort** offers cabins and studio accommodation and more than 100 caravan and camp sites. Or if you want to get back to nature, pitch a tent at a beachside **National Park Campground** including at Patonga, Tallow Beach, Putty Beach, Little Beach and Frazer Beach.

Moving away from the beach, adventure hub **Glenworth Valley** has a 200-acre riverfront campground where natural bush camping and luxurious bell tents are available. There's also several self-contained eco villas available, one with its own outdoor tub overlooking the expansive wilderness where you can indulge in horse riding, abseiling, quad biking, kayaking and more.

**To explore more Central Coast summer ready experiences, visit [lovecentralcoast.com/stay](http://lovecentralcoast.com/stay)**





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# DESTINATIONS



Claudia walking among the heritage Havelis of Mandawa.



Spending time with rescue elephant, Laxmi, near Jaipur.



Village women carry water jugs from the well.



# CLAUDIA WOLF

## *Expect the unexpected.*

If you're like me and organised tours aren't quite your thing, but you love the idea of travelling with a fun friend who's a seasoned traveller, knows all the best places to visit and unusual places to stay, and is both organised and open to impromptu detours – then Claudia Wolf is the person for you.

Claudia fell in love with India 35 years ago and it keeps drawing her back.

'I started Tikka Tours nine years ago for travel to India, Sri Lanka and Nepal,' she says. 'It's like my second home now but each time I still discover something new in its traditions, cultures, wildlife or cuisine.'

Claudia loves the romance of India and makes a point of visiting special places like the Stepwells that were once water reservoirs. They can date back to 200-400 AD. In the dark of night, she might take her group there for a special dinner. The only lighting is from 1,000 candles.

Another, very local experience, is a visit to the Sikh kitchens, large community kitchens that feed meals free of charge regardless of religion, caste or gender.

Libby, from Copacabana, remembers the experience of being beckoned over by one of the cooks to help her roll chapatis, surrounded by huge cauldrons of dahl and the aroma of simmering curries.

Don and Lesley from Point Frederick have travelled with Claudia and Tikka Tours four times and already have plans for their fifth trip. For them it's the very personal service. 'There's always a local guide and driver. Rohit, Tikka Tours' long-time local guide, has an uncanny knack of knowing what you need almost before you need it,' says Lesley.

'I had an asthma attack on one trip which meant a rushed visit to hospital,' says Don. 'However, at our next destination it flared up again, meaning more antibiotics.'

'The driver contacted the same hospital and organised for the meds to be made available wherever we were scheduled to stop. It was a great relief and peace of mind. We wouldn't have been able to do that ourselves.'

They also like the out-of-the-ordinary accommodation Claudia finds.

'Often it's in palaces and one time we stayed with the maharaja's son who was doing up the family home and converting it into a hotel,' says Lesley. 'His grandfather loved fast cars, fast horses and fast women, and had lost all the family's money. We were treated like royalty.'

Another favourite heritage hotel, though much less luxurious, is the famed Marigold Hotel (yes, the Best Exotic one) where Claudia keeps

her own range of saris and turbans for her group to wear to dinner. Also residing on the property are the specially bred, curly-eared Marwari horses. A rare sight.

Expect the unexpected on a tour with Claudia – in the best possible way.

'On one trip there was a local festival that was not on our itinerary,' says Don. 'That doesn't stop Claudie. We detoured to the village and it was such an up-close and unexpected cultural experience of colour and music and costumes.'

Libby tells of similar experiences.

'One time we just "happened upon" a desert camel festival where camels are bought and sold. The camels and their babies were all beautifully garbed in ornate cloth, jewellery and even make up!

'Another time we were driving along a country road and Claudia told us we'd be making an unexpected detour to buy bananas. What she didn't immediately say was that the fruit was for a visit to a sanctuary for rescued elephants, and I think is quite difficult to get into. We were able to feed them the bananas and helped washing down the elephants too.'

'These are the reasons I keep coming back,' says Libby. 'These experiences stay in your heart forever. **C**

tikkatours.com.au



One of the Marwari horse at the exotic Marigold Hotel.

WORDS AND PHOTOS **PAUL CARROLL**

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD: THOSE WHO WANT TO WALK THE KOKODA TRACK, AND THOSE WHO WOULD PUT IT ON THE VERY OPPOSITE OF A BUCKET LIST, IF THERE WAS SUCH A THING.

For those who fall into the first camp, whatever their age, walking the Kokoda Track has become something of a rite of passage. And that's understandable if you have a father or grandfather who fought on the rugged terrain of Kokoda in World War II. But there are others, like me, who have no military history in the family. At 72, I still have a passion for the Kokoda Track, despite having 'walked' it seven times. I have my eighth crossing locked in for July 2025.

The Kokoda Track is often referred to as one of the 10 most difficult walks in the world. It starts at Owers Corner, 50 km east of Port Moresby, and crosses the mountains to the remote village of Kokoda, a distance of 96 km, a trek that usually takes six to seven days. The terrain is rugged and combined with weather conditions calls for high level physical, mental and emotional agility and determination.

Your feet will be sore, your stamina drained by the heat, your legs will ache. You'll slide backwards in the mud, and the river crossings will test you whether wading against the current or getting a helping hand from a PNG guide as you as you try to keep your feet dry and balance along a narrow tree trunk. The distant scenery is wild and spectacular but, dauntingly, also reveals the endlessly steep terrain and how far you have yet to trek.

Why then do so many hundreds continue to walk the track, 78 years after the end of the War that made it famous?

When asked why I would want to walk the Track eight times I explain that I do it for the physical and mental challenge; the history, its military significance and respect for the diggers; the beauty of the landscape; the people of the PNG highlands; the camaraderie within the trekking group, and the 'spirituality' of the experience.

I am fortunate to have Bill James as a long-time friend. Bill is a noted historian of the battlefields of the WWII Kokoda campaign and author of the book, *Field Guide to the Kokoda Track: An Historical Guide to the Lost Battlefields*.

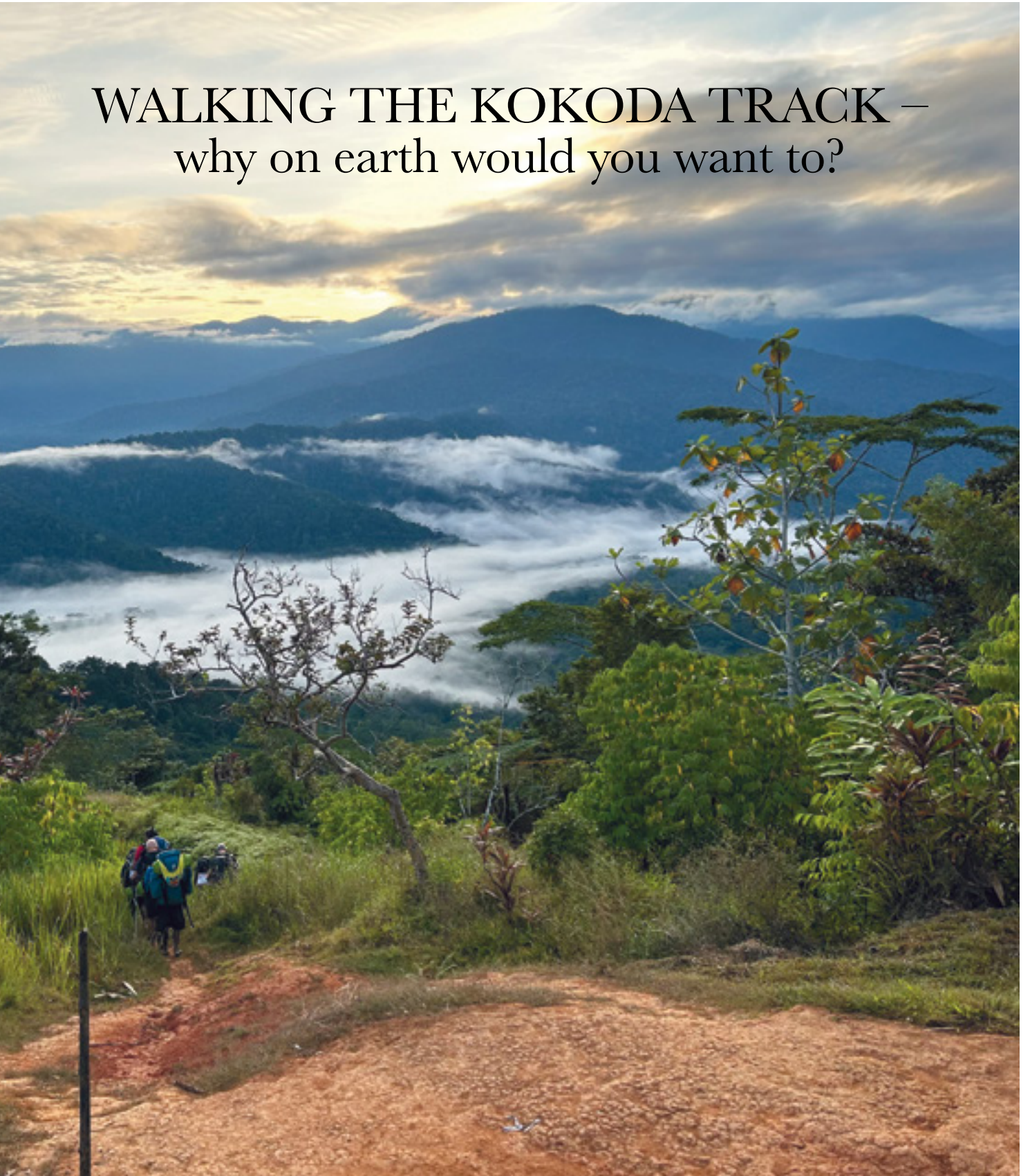
We pass names I had once only read in history books: Brigade Hill and Mission Ridge; the steep climb up to Efogi and then down the other side; we cross Eora Creek and advance to the Japanese defensive positions; and Isurava's battlefields. Bill brings the history alive, along with emotions, heroic deeds and the sacrifices made by the Diggers and their families. The evidence of history is all around. ►►



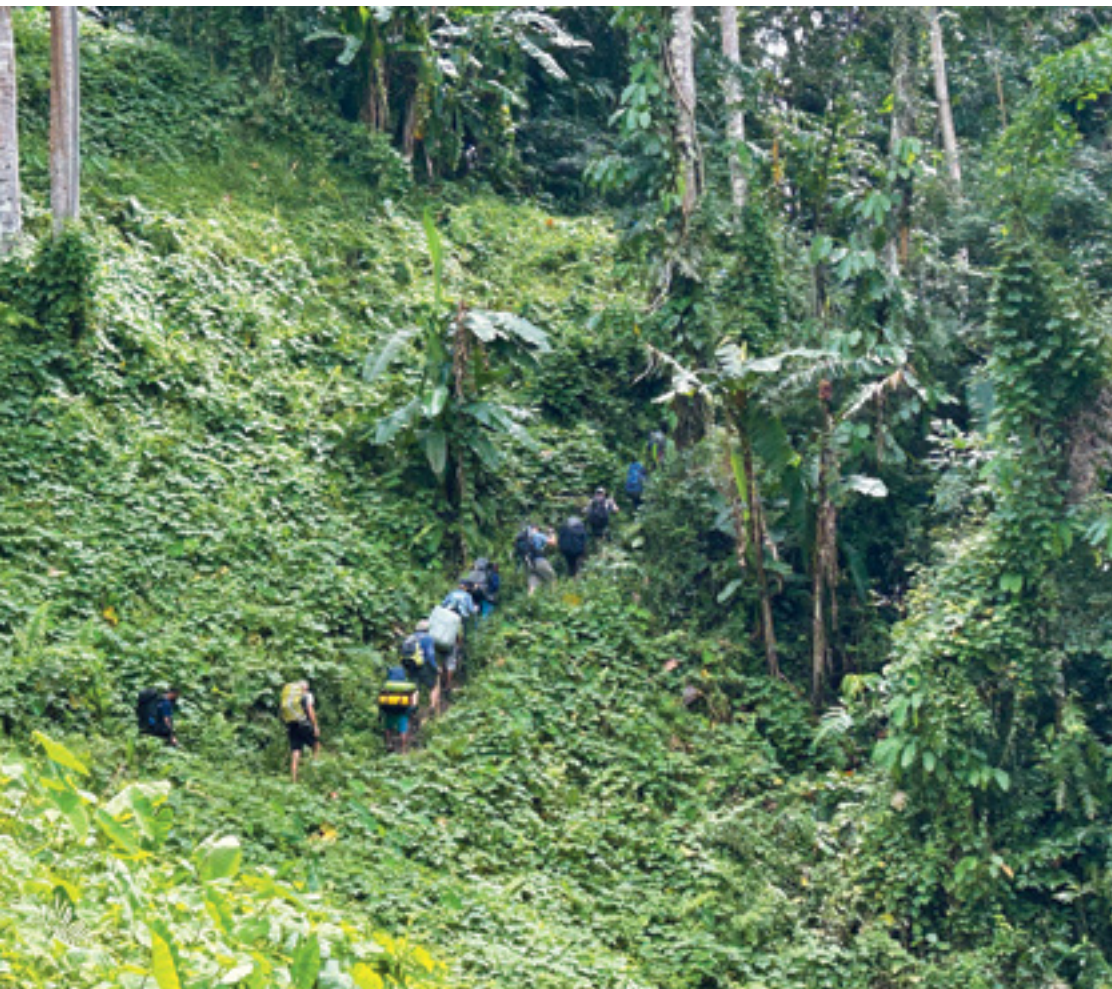
The wild beauty of the Kokoda Track near the village of Nauro. (A steep track down also means a steep track up the other side.)



# WALKING THE KOKODA TRACK – why on earth would you want to?







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

COAST staffer, Alex Tkachenko putting in the hard yards. 'It's the tree roots that get you'.

Jim Lloyd is steadied by nimble porters while crossing a river.

Climbing Deniki Ridge single file through the jungle's growth. ►►



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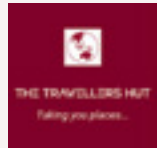
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LEFT Paul Carroll crossing a 'modern day, 5-star' bridge.

BOTTOM The Isurava Memorial is inscribed with the words that exemplified Kokoda's Diggers: 'courage', 'endurance', 'mateship', 'sacrifice'.

I have recently returned from the Track with a group of 16, around half of whom were from our region: Jim Lloyd (Mooney Mooney), Steven Lloyd (Kariong), Anthony (Tony) Collins (Noraville), Ocean Beach Tyrepower owner, Vic Mostaert (Saratoga), Bradley Holden (Maitland) and Alex Tkachenko (from Wamberal, and is a COAST magazine team member).

What did the Track mean to them?

Former Federal MHR, Jim (69) says, 'The Kokoda Track takes you places, both physically and emotionally, where you have never been before. It forced me to find inner strengths that I never knew I had and has made me a stronger and more resilient person.'

Jim's son, Steven, comments, 'Experiencing the toughest physical and mental challenge of my life with my Dad was certainly a highlight of my life so far.'

Tony (76) previously walked the Track with me in 2019 and noted that the return this year 'proved just as arduous, the long climbs as endless, the descents as slippery and difficult.'

Vic stated, 'The physical effort was tough, but I found the mental and emotional strain absolutely stretched me to the limit.'

Brad found the trek to be 'A life-changing journey filled with physical and mental challenges, historical significance and a profound connection to nature and the local communities.'

Alex, however, was the outstanding story of the group. Her motivation to train and walk the Track was to demonstrate to her two young sons that 'Anything is possible if you put your mind to it and do the work. It's the hardest thing I've done in my life and the most emotionally moving experience (thanks to Bill James and fellow trekkers).'

Day two almost sent Alex home via a rescue helicopter. In her words, 'I was nauseous, dehydrated, vomiting, delirious with the never-ending upwards ascent, but I couldn't give up. I had to say "no" to the rescue helicopter because I'd told my boys, "anything is possible if you put your mind to it".'

Alex had to push herself the hardest every day and, at the archway that marks the finish of the Track, the group stood aside and asked her to take the honour to lead us all over the line. Alex should tell her story, often, and I hope her boys are extremely proud of their Mum's achievement. She made the seemingly impossible become possible. She found the reason within herself why people continue to walk the Kokoda Track. **C**







  
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# TOWER LODGE

*A splendid hope, well-realised*



Tower Lodge pool





Tower Suite bedroom

*'We love to welcome guests to a personally tailored experience of the Hunter Valley,' says Michael. 'And we hope to have them return regularly, just as they would to their own country home.'*

#### WORDS CATHARINE RETTER

TOWER LODGE OWNERS, MICHAEL AND KAREN HOPE, WHO ALSO OWN HOPE ESTATE ACROSS THE ROAD IN THE HEART OF POKOLBIN, ARE THE APTLY NAMED COUPLE WHOSE VISION HAS RELAUNCHED THE LUXURY ESTATE AFTER A \$6 MILLION REFURBISHMENT.

Set among the vineyards and gumtrees, it's true to say that guests feel they are welcomed more as friends, and it's little wonder. The family connection extends to son, Sam Hope, who looks after the guest experience and to elder son, Jonno, who supplies the free-range Angus beef from the family's farm in the upper Hunter. Michael and Karen have brought their own personal style and furnishings to Tower Lodge to complete the warm and very stylish 'at home' feel.

'We love to welcome guests to a personally tailored experience of the Hunter Valley,' says Michael. 'And we hope to have them return regularly, just as they would to their own country home.'

Tower Lodge's origins lie rich in the Hunter's winemaking history and was the creation of renowned winemaker and culinary legend, the late Len Evans, together with a group of the region's principal winemakers. The Hopes bought the property with its Spanish-style architecture in 2013, and six years later embarked on the extensive refurbishment of the exterior and interior spaces.

'Each of the lodges is individually styled,' say Karen. 'There are classical Spanish features, soaring ceilings, textured flooring, elegant lighting and artwork. There's even a rooftop hot tub and a circa 1550 four-poster bed from Rajasthan in one.'



The restaurant at Tower Lodge

The restaurant, under esteemed chef Anthony Fullerton, is set with soaring wood ceilings and is the ideal place to unwind with a sunset drink and canapés, followed by a menu sourced from local producers as well as the family's farm and the kitchen garden. And of course, no visit to the Hunter would be complete without sampling the region's world-renowned wines,

It's a short walk to the Hope Estate's vineyard with its estate-grown wines, cellar door, a distillery and craft brewery. And the Estate's concert amphitheatre is famous for playing host to local and world-class events that have included Bruce Springsteen, Fleetwood Mac and the Rolling Stones.

Only a little further afield, the range of experiences in the Hunter Valley are integral to a stay at Tower Lodge, whether you are after guided culinary or wine-tasting adventures, to explore the countryside, or just watch the kangaroos appear at sunrise and sunset. **C**

[towerlodge.com.au](http://towerlodge.com.au)

# GREAT OUTDOORS

WITH BEACHES FOR ALL,  
THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE

WORDS LIESL TESCH



*'Accessibility shouldn't be a barrier to allowing our community to access the beautiful natural environment that the Central Coast has to offer.'*



Living on the Central Coast, we're blessed with 41 beautiful beaches as our very own 'backyard'. Eighty kilometres' worth! Year-round, that sublime blurring of land and sea, of suburbia at sunset, and nature, is something to behold. Everyone deserves to have access to these beautiful places. I've lived and worked on the Coast since 1996 and I never take it for granted.

I try to swim at Pearl Beach most mornings. It's a nice narrow beach that allows me to waddle across the sand and then crawl into the water – often pristine clear – and it's always a perfect way to start the day.

### Roll out the welcome mat

When it comes to improving access to the beaches across the Central Coast, our Council is leading the way in NSW and has done an amazing job.

Curving along the Coast is Toowoyn Bay Beach which has accessible beach matting year-round, and accessible parking right out the front. Beach wheelchairs are available there too.

Just a few kilometres north at The Entrance, at the Visitor Information Centre, there's now a 24/7 adult accessible change facility (AACF). It's accessible via the Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK). There's a MLAK available at the customer service desk.

During patrol season (September to April) beach matting is installed at Umina Beach, Ocean Beach and Terrigal. When the beach matting is out at Umina and Ocean Beach, I just love it. It gets widely used by all types of people, including children, the elderly ... and even wedding parties.

### Beach wheelchairs

If you depend upon a wheelchair to get around, beach wheelchairs with larger, wider wheels are available to get you across the sand. There are also models that can be submerged so you can swim in the ocean baths.

Wheelchair hire is free for both locals and visitors living with a disability or limited mobility at 13 of our 15 patrolled beaches (you can book via your local Surf Lifesaving Club or ask a lifeguard on duty). It's always a good idea to book ahead to make sure the right type is available. I should add there are also patrols at the ocean pool complex, The Grant McBride Baths at The Entrance.

A special thanks goes to our Central Coast Surf Lifesaving volunteers who assist people with disabilities use the cross-section of beach access wheelchairs to get from the clubhouse to the water.

### Inclusive Nippers program at Avoca Beach

At Avoca Beach just south of Terrigal, there is a wonderful Nippers program called 'Sharkies' that is changing lives for kids of all abilities. Great work has been done to help with desensitising kids with sensory needs to the feel of the sand. With desensitisation, important beach safety and water safety skills onboard, all kids can now get out on the sand to enjoy it with their siblings and their families. Sharkies was based on similar programs in Queensland and the southern states. Give your local SLSC a call to find your inclusive programs.



© CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL



© CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL

### Try surfing!

Disabled Surfing Australia regularly runs 'come and try' days during summer. This is loads of fun and provides the opportunity for people at all accessibility levels to have an initial experience or advance their surfing careers.

Regardless of where your favourite spot is for a dip, it's always a good idea to call your Surf Life Saving Club ahead of time just in case a mat is in for repair, or a tyre on an accessible beach wheelchair needs some TLC. Central Coast Council has a helpful 'Accessible Beaches Central Coast' pamphlet on its website. You can also pick up a copy at your local library and at Gosford and Wyong Customer Service Centres.

Accessibility shouldn't be a barrier to allowing our community to access the beautiful natural environment that the Central Coast has to offer. I look forward to advocating alongside our community to ensure everyone on the Central Coast can access our beautiful coastal environment. **C**

[centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/residents/support-programs/accessibility-and-inclusion](http://centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/residents/support-programs/accessibility-and-inclusion)

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# WELL BEING



## The safety of comfort zones

Your heart is racing, your palms are sweaty, and you try not to imagine the worst that can possibly happen when you take that plunge beyond what is safe and familiar.

For one person that plunge may be confronting a spider in the bathroom and taking it into the garden. Or you may be a seasoned couch potato who's been persuaded to attend a yoga class filled with fit, contortionist-level, lycra-clad, god-like creatures. For another, it may be perching at the door of an aeroplane just before you take that great leap of faith to parachute to Earth.

I am definitely not an adrenaline junkie who wants to talk you into cliff-diving or base jumping, or even pushing yourself too fast in smaller challenges. But whatever your fear, and however daunting it may be, facing it can represent a path to personal growth and self-discovery. Once you challenge your discomfort, you can discover capabilities, growth and even creativity you never knew you had.

### Practice makes perfect

All it takes is one first step. And who cares what you look like in yoga pants –only you! Everyone else is too busy looking at themselves.

Hate public speaking? Take small steps – short speeches with the comfort of notes, and small crowds to start with if you can – and the more you do it, the less daunting it becomes (take this as a promise from someone who has had sleepless nights before speaking in public!). You may even grow to like the occasional laughter and applause you can generate.

Are you too daunted by the thought of learning a musical instrument or a new language to even begin? What's the worst that can happen to you ... that your teacher hears your stumbling efforts? She's a teacher! She's heard it all before and probably loves the thought that she can help you progress.

### What if at first you fail and don't succeed?

Of course that can happen. You may decide to stay strapped into your aeroplane seat or call for help to dispatch that spider. But there's always a next time. And do you know what that proves? It demonstrates that you are building resilience and the ability to bounce back from adversity.

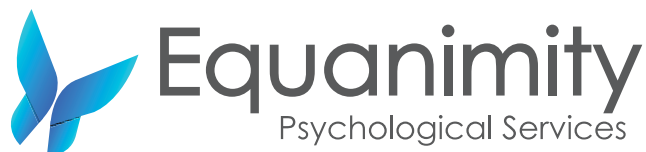
Here's a secret: when you are open to embracing challenges, you can learn to adapt, to find creative solutions around a problem. Instead of an aeroplane, try parasailing behind a boat. You'd still be trying something new and it will give you all the exhilaration without the fear of your parachute not opening. Finding a creative solution doesn't just apply to the challenge at hand, it's your toolkit for navigating what comes along in the twists and turns of a lifetime.

Each time you conquer a challenge outside your comfort zone, you gain a sense of accomplishment that reinforces your confidence and the belief in your abilities. So go for it. Take small steps. What have you got to lose other than your fears? **C**





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# COAST VIBES

## WEAVING ART IN NATURE

WORDS TARA WELLS







Lee Cavender's workshops are hosted biannually at Bells at Killcare. Make a natural Christmas wreath with Lee on Sunday 10 December 2023. Or choose from a range of events throughout 2024, from basket weaving to art classes, yoga retreats and food events. See the 'What's On' page at [bellsatkillcare.com.au](https://bellsatkillcare.com.au).

'Just a word of warning: this is highly addictive. Once you start weaving, you won't want to stop,' warns Lee Cavender while handing out tangly Bangalow Palm inflorescence to get us hooked at a workshop at Bells at Killcare.

Her 30-year experience as a florist, including teaching at the renowned Pearsons School of Floristry, and passion for creating beautiful things out of nature, is inspiring even the least creative among us to try.

Lee started weaving at eight years of age when a relative gave her a raffia basket-making kit. Decades later, her raffia creations are on show in the form of two oversized yet understated light shades in Bells' Wild Flower Bar & Dining.

It's the pendant's mix of drama and lightness that we hope to emulate today, albeit on a much smaller scale. We're shown three options, recommended for varying experience levels: a wall hanging, woven basket, or sculptural piece.

Most materials come from Lee's garden, including the Bangalow Palm's long flowery branches, more correctly known as its inflorescence. Native to the Central Coast, the palm is pruned when fresh then dried for about three months. The evening before workshops, Lee soaks the inflorescence to make them moist and pliable for weaving.

Lee shows us the basic technique. It's called 'random weaving'. There are no rules - 'just go with the flow' Lee urges, because success depends on sufficient tension to hold the piece together rather than uniform patterns. Reflecting the materials we're working with, it's an organic process.

At the workshop ends, each creation looks entirely unique. Lee's satisfaction comes from seeing participants' creativity. 'It blows me away. I give them the material, I give them the technique and then they show me their ideas.' **C**



# ATONG ATEM

## *the vibrant face of art*

WORDS MAUREEN COLLINS

*Her vibrant palette and stylised imagery bridge the historic with otherworld fantasy.*



© ATONG ATEM, I HAVE TWO OF EVERYTHING 1, 2021. COURTESY OF MARS GALLERY AND THE ARTIST.

There is no doubt that South Sudanese photographer Atong Atem is big news. Global interest in her work grows daily. And while her craft is driven by past injustices against black Africans, there remains something endearingly whimsical about both her outlook on life and her work.

Atong's journey in Australia has been a revelation too. Initially based on the Central Coast after coming to Australia as a six-year-old, she felt isolated in a new country. Interestingly, it was the adults not her peers who caused these feelings. 'There were few people like me there,' she says.

Things improved when she went to university and again when she moved to Sydney. Later, living in Melbourne with its diverse and accessible arts communities, she was able to work towards becoming a full time artist.

Her first love was painting; initially, at high school and then at university. Later, she made the decision to drop out of architecture to attend art school.

'While I was studying architecture at Newcastle Uni, I lived with a group of people who were part of a theatre and arts troupe called "The Lovelorn Living Party", Atong says. 'A few of them, including my friends Lila and Emily, were professional face painters. Lila taught me everything ... I eventually inherited some of their face painting kit.' The influence of the face painters remains strong in her art.

A breadth of other influences, ranging from films and archival documentation to science-fiction and video games, impact Atong's work and numerous self-portraits are finished with melancholic African and Australian touches, a testament to her double life on both the African and Australian continents. The results are eclectic, enthralling, and utterly original.

'I spend a lot of time consuming all kinds of art and have so many visual ideas and concepts stored haphazardly in my brain,' she says.

Atong knows no fear. By her own admission, she plays at things and trusts in the process of journeying wherever that leads her and, so far, this has resulted in painting, photography, installation, sculpture and combinations of any of these. Much of her work coalesces photography and painting even though she only began using a DSLR camera in 2015. She is not only adaptable but a quick learner!

Atong returns to the Central Coast for an exhibition of her work at the Gosford Regional Gallery. **C**

**Atong Atem: Banksia exhibition at the Gosford Regional Gallery  
24 February to 14 April 2024.**





© ATONG ATEM, HENNA 1, 2021. COURTESY OF MARS GALLERY AND THE ARTIST.



© ATONG ATEM, BANKSIA (STILL), 2021. COMMISSIONED BY RISING AND ILLUMINATE ADELAIDE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEILSON FOUNDATION, COURTESY OF MARS GALLERY AND THE ARTIST.

# COUNTRY ROCKER

## ON THE COAST

WORDS PHILIPPA MACKEN



David and Jane Kirkpatrick

When local singer-songwriter David Kirkpatrick pulled together a band to play at his daughter's wedding, he knew he'd found something special. And it feels apt that David's latest musical endeavour draws on his rich pedigree as the son of legendary country stars Slim Dusty and Joy McKean.

'I was thrilled when my daughter said she wanted a country rock band for her special day,' says David. 'Even though I love country rock, I'd never been in a band of that genre.'

David contacted long-time friends and fellow musicians Ian Rhodes, Graham Puglisi, Glenn Willey and brother-in-law Greg Richardson, and Two Tone Pony was created.

'I was born on the road in 1958, when Slim and Joy were touring the agricultural shows,' says David. 'My grandmother and Joy stopped in Rockhampton so she could give birth to me, and a week later we boarded a train full of cane cutters and travelled to Cairns to re-join the show.'

His parent's legendary bush ballads were in his blood, but David was a child of the times. Heavily influenced by the likes of Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones, he taught himself guitar and drums during high school.

'A fellow student asked me to join his band and we went on to play together all through university while I was studying medicine,' says David. 'That friend was Glenn Willey, now part of Two Tone Pony.'

In a twist of fate, it was David's obsession with performing that saw him begin a new life on the Central Coast in his twenties.

'We were playing three or four gigs per week in Sydney and, as a result, I didn't pass my final exam and ended up graduating two months late,' says David. 'This meant I had to forgo any choice of where I did my medical internship and was placed at Gosford Hospital.'

'I moved in with another intern who happened to be a keyboard player. Within a week we had another band. It was music that brought me to the Coast and I've never looked back - I love it.'

David began an illustrious career as an emergency department doctor that would span three decades.

'I found it exhilarating,' he says. 'You've no idea who's coming through the door and you need to know everything from obstetrics to accident trauma and paediatrics.'

David married midwifery student Jane, and the Central Coast became their forever home where they raised their two children. David continued to play music throughout his medical career.

After retiring in 2019, David was able to indulge in music full time, honing his song-writing skills and performing with Two Tone Pony at Hardys Bay Club. The band's first single, *A Life Well Lived*, was released earlier this year.

'I tend to write the music and lyrics all at once, taking inspiration from whatever's happening around me,' says David. 'Our latest single, *Stormy Weather*, is a love song to my wife.'

Despite being influenced by the rock bands of the late '70s and '80s, the music of Two Tone Pony reflects David's country roots, featuring everything from upbeat acoustic to southern rock style, reminiscent of Creedence Clearwater Revival and Neil Young.

The band will release a full album in 2024 and, with life coming full circle, David hopes to hit the road next year touring through regional Australia and telling authentic stories, just like old times. **C**



Two Tone Pony band



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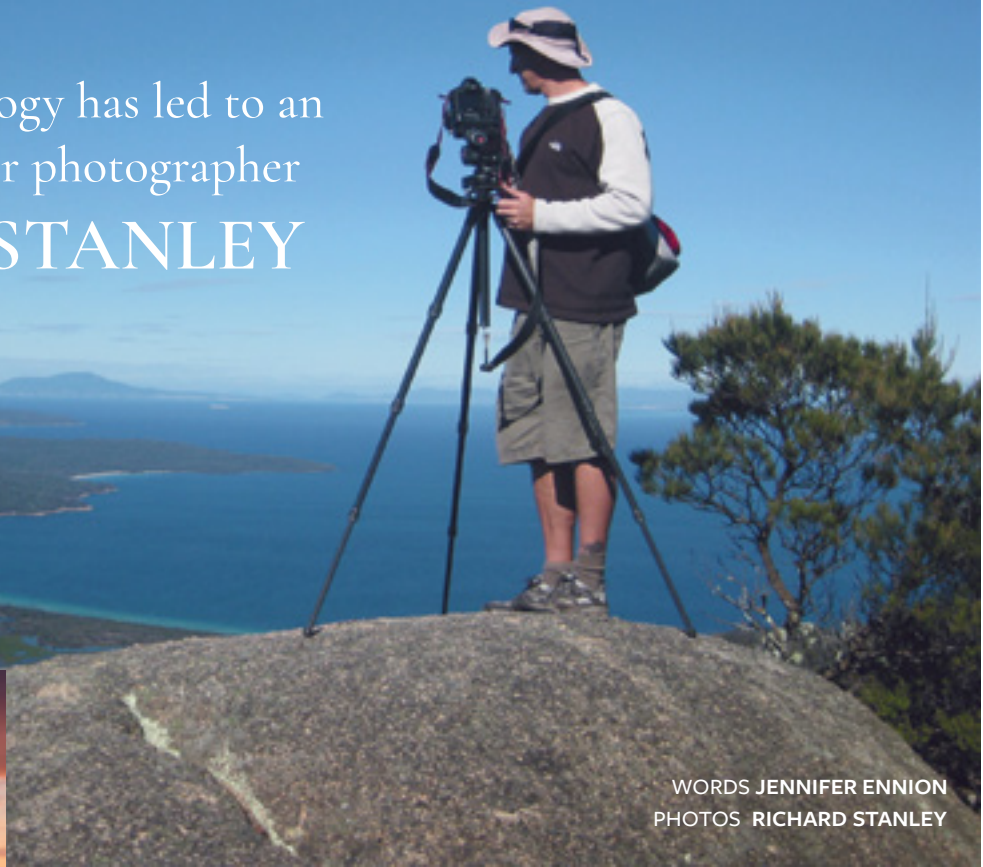
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# Embracing technology has led to an illustrious career for photographer **RICHARD STANLEY**



WORDS JENNIFER ENNION  
PHOTOS RICHARD STANLEY



Bateau Bay



Barrington Tops

In the shadows of the Opera House sails, Richard Stanley took his first steps toward a career as a professional landscape photographer. From a market stall, the keen artist from Nottingham, England, sold his photos alongside his peers. Yet Richard stood apart. He was the only photographer selling prints captured with a digital SLR.

‘I was told by them “whatever you do, don’t tell people it’s from a digital camera”,’ he says with a laugh. ‘It was very much frowned on when digital first came out; it was almost seen as cheating, I guess... (but) when you’re shooting with film it’s expensive and making mistakes is just going to cost you a lot of money.’

That was 20 years ago. Over the decades, Richard has continued to embrace the technological advances in photographic equipment, whether he’s capturing beaches, mountains or embracing aerial photography via helicopter or drone.

‘You could take a hundred shots of the same thing and, with a digital camera, very quickly understand what mistakes you’ve made, what works, what doesn’t.’

Having lived on the Central Coast for the past 18 years, Richard believes there is abundant photographic potential right here. Some of his favourite local spots to take his camera include Bouddi and Brisbane Water national parks, Somersby Falls, Norah Head’s beaches and Munmorah State Conservation Area. Beyond the Central Coast, he is drawn to the Outback, to places such as the Flinders Ranges and Uluru. To reach the more remote locations, Richard often camps, enjoying being alone in the landscape and truly experiencing it.

‘When you get out into there, it kind of shows you what life’s all about. It’s not just about commuting to and from work, or standing in



one spot. And when you see the wildlife and these natural places you can't help but be spurred on to make sure that they're kept in their pristine condition.

'When there's nobody else there, I think it's the solitude that really helps, in my photography anyway...' he says.

Richard sells his photography through his business R. a. Stanley Landscape Photography, and also co-owns Lemon Tree Framing Gallery, in East Gosford, with his wife, Lynsey. Lemon Tree Framing Gallery is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary, with the Stanleys at the helm for the past 13 years.

'In the Gallery, we treat everything as a treasured item, whether it's a child's drawing, an expensive piece of art, a school cross-country ribbon or medals from the war,' says Lynsey. 'They all need to be preserved and look beautiful for a lifetime. And I believe it's this approach, together with the custom framing options, our conservation grade products and large format printing process that have let us maintain Lemon Tree's position on the Coast for so long.'

[rastanley.com.au](http://rastanley.com.au) and [lemontreeframing.com.au](http://lemontreeframing.com.au)

Richard's beautiful photography was featured on the cover of first issue of COAST magazine, as well as on the cover of this issue.



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# AUTHOR FIONA LLOYD ON CREATING JIMMY BAXTER

WORDS JENNIFER ENNION





Despite being from two different worlds, Central Coast author Fiona Lloyd leaned into her love of rural Australia for her debut novel.

When Fiona Lloyd wasn't buried in books at her local library, she was relishing an escape from the fast-paced city she lived in, to the wild beaches and rolling green countryside of north-east England. Her childhood home couldn't have been further from the one she gave the middle-grade protagonist in her debut novel, *Being Jimmy Baxter*. The Central Coast author drew inspiration from her adopted homeland, creating a fictional town based on her travels into rural Australia.

'The dry rural landscape I drove through on my visits to Dubbo and Mudgee, and the highway to Canberra, were the total opposite of my little piece of England,' she says. 'Now, I glimpsed Dorothea Mackellar's wide brown land.'

Although the landscape in the novel differs to that of Lloyd's adolescent years, the author has inserted some of her own universal emotions and struggles. On the surface, *Being Jimmy Baxter*, aimed at 10- to 14-year-olds, is a coming-of-age story about a young boy navigating upheaval, and finding his place in a new town with new people. Go deeper and this is a story about mental health, with alcoholism, domestic violence and depression running through the pages. It's an important subject, yet despite its seriousness, Fiona tackles it with simple, childlike language, a sprinkling of humour and plenty of naivety (on Jimmy's part). Fiona's characters and their sometimes painful situations are authentic, something the mum of three has been able to achieve by leaning into her own mental health struggles.

'A lot of those emotions and experiences are drawn exactly from myself,' she says. 'I struggled with depression when I had my first son because I didn't know anybody on the Coast ... I felt alone, trying to make a life in a new land.'

She can authentically write about upheaval not just because she moved countries at the age of 29, but because she experienced it often as a child as well.

'We moved a lot,' she says of her childhood. 'I went to five schools, so I was always the new girl.'

Despite this, *Being Jimmy Baxter*, set in the '90s, isn't a heavy book, but rather an honest portrayal of adult themes experienced from the perspective of a rough-around-the-edges, lovable Aussie kid. Twelve-year-old Jimmy is endearing, and his innocence and positive outlook keep you turning the pages.



Fiona says Jimmy came to her while reading Morris Gleitzman's *Once* series about friendship during the Holocaust. Fiona was invested in Gleitzman's main character, Felix, and how the author tackled a dark topic in a way that was accessible to children. She says it wasn't a deliberate choice to write upper middle grade but Jimmy's voice came to her naturally.

'We were driving back from Byron at the time, and I was kind of just staring out the window; I had my notepad, thinking of Felix and then Jimmy arriving and the landscape ... so it kind of all came together from that,' she says.

Friendship is a big part of her book too, and she's skilful at creating believable relationships and characters.

*Being Jimmy Baxter* hit bookstore shelves in July after a three-year journey from idea to publication. Although it's Fiona's first novel, the Kariong resident is entrenched in the local and NSW writing industry. She is the Schools Program Coordinator for Words on the Waves Writers' Festival, and a member of the Children's Book Council of Australia, and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. In between all of these commitments, and raising her three children, she continues to write, while also watching the world meet Jimmy Baxter. **C**

\**Being Jimmy Baxter* is published by Penguin Random House, RRP: \$16.99



# OUT & ABOUT

WORDS MEGAN ARKINSTALL



*Check out these local summer events!*



## **THE ROLLING SETS, The Entrance – 9 December**

Start summer off with a musical bang at The Rolling Sets; the cruisy one-day festival is back for its second year at The Entrance Memorial Park. It has an epic line-up including psychedelic surf rockers Ocean Alley, Freo group Spacey Jane and east coast folk duo The Dreggs. Add on accommodation for the night at The Village, a set-up at Shelly Beach Holiday Park in a luxe bell tent.

[rollingsets.com.au](http://rollingsets.com.au)

## **LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL, The Entrance – 10 December**

Back up The Rolling Sets with this newly minted music festival, held at Memorial Park the following day. You'll spot big names in this line-up including Grinspoon, The Cat Empire and UK duo Royal Blood, as well as Six60, Skeggs and more across two stages. There'll also be street food and market stalls.

[letthegoodtimesrollfestival.com.au](http://letthegoodtimesrollfestival.com.au)





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**AVOCA BEACH TWILIGHT MARKET,  
Avoca – 9 December**

It's time to get your Christmas shopping done stat, and what better way than under the stars browsing an array of quality local gifts. From the clever folk behind Avoca Beachside Markets, this one-night-only event includes almost 100 bespoke stalls, so you can get a head-start on your Christmas list. There will also be food trucks, live music and a bar run by local fave Six Strings Brewing, for some post-shopping beverages on a balmy eve.

[fixxevents.com.au](http://fixxevents.com.au)

**LOVE LANES FESTIVAL,  
Wyong – 10 February**

There ain't no seven-year itch for this uber-cool evening fest in the heart of Wyong. The heritage town's four lanes are struck with Cupid's bow for this loved-up festival held just before Valentine's Day. From 4 pm, the town will be abuzz with music and dance performances, roving entertainment, food and market stalls, a kids' zone across four stages and in the charming laneways.

[lovecentralcoast.com/lovelanes](http://lovecentralcoast.com/lovelanes)



**NEW YEAR'S EVE,  
The Entrance – 31 December**

Farewell 2023 at this family friendly event held at The Entrance Memorial Park on New Year's Eve. Listen to live music on the main stage as the sun melts over the waterfront, tuck into some street food at the many food vans and enjoy roving entertainment before a magical display of fireworks at 9 pm.







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**LOST PARADISE,**  
Glenworth Valley – 28 December  
to 1 January

Another way to ring in the new year, Lost Paradise is a five-stage music festival, with performers from Flume to Lime Cordiale to Dom Dolla performing over the four-day event. Music lovers can camp or glamp in beautiful Glenworth Valley and join in non-music experiences, too, including yoga and meditation, creative workshops, exchange ideas at talks and debates, and gain a deeper understanding of our First Nations people through the Indigenous cultural program. There's also a market village where you can eat, drink and shop, and the VIP Club Paradiso for those who like to get lost in paradise but keep it fancy.

[lostparadise.com.au](http://lostparadise.com.au)

**AUSTRALIA DAY,**  
Gosford – 26 January

The Leagues Club Park in Gosford will be a bustling celebration for Australia Day, with live music and food stalls, as well as a heap of activities for little event goers such as a mini-fire truck, soft play area, giant lawn games and sports games. The eventful day will be topped off with a 9 pm fireworks display.



**MAX ADVENTURE RACE,**  
Lake Macquarie – 10 February

Time to come good on your New Years' resolution about getting fit and having more adventures (etc. etc.) with this outdoor challenge that sees participants team up with a mate and complete a run, cycle and kayak. This isn't just a fitness test, though. You also need to navigate your way around the course using a compass and topographic map. The catch? The course is a secret until registration on the day.

[maxadventurerace.com.au](http://maxadventurerace.com.au)



Central Coast Council

**SUNDAY  
31 DEC**  
5:30-9:00PM

**NEW  
YEARS  
EVE  
2023**

THE ENTRANCE  
MEMORIAL PARK

**FREE EVENT**  
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT  
ACTIVITIES  
FOOD STALLS  
FIREWORKS

**FEATURING**  
RILEY LOVELL  
TOBY WELLS  
THE APPOINTMENTS  
SUNSOLI

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[LOVECENTRALCOAST.COM/EVENTS/NEW-YEARS-EVE-AT-THE-ENTRANCE-2023](http://LOVECENTRALCOAST.COM/EVENTS/NEW-YEARS-EVE-AT-THE-ENTRANCE-2023)

Central Coast Council

**Australia  
Day**

**FRI 26 JAN 2024 4-9PM**

LEAGUES CLUB PARK GOSFORD

FAMILY PICNIC • FOOD STALLS • FIREWORKS

FOR MORE INFO VISIT  
[lovecentralcoast.com/events/australia-day-gosford](http://lovecentralcoast.com/events/australia-day-gosford)

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**WYONG TOWN CENTRE**

**SATURDAY  
10 FEB 2024**  
4-9PM

FOOD STALLS  
MARKET STALLS  
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KIDS ACTIVITIES  
AND MORE

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LANES**

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4 LANES  
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1 PARK


FEATURING  
DEAR SUNDAY  
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BREAD CLUB  
HOLLY HEBE  
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FOR MORE INFO VISIT  
[lovecentralcoast.com/love-lanes-festival](http://lovecentralcoast.com/love-lanes-festival)

Central Coast Council

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# COAST FAMILIES

*Fun for Kids*

## GET BACK TO NATURE THIS SUMMER

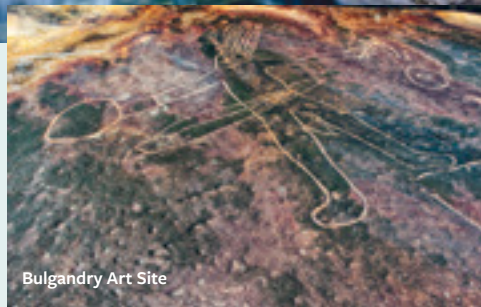
WITH THE WEATHER WELL AND TRULY WARMED UP, WE'VE CONSIDERED DIFFERENT OPTIONS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY TO GET BACK TO NATURE.

WORDS JULIE WRIGHT



Kariong Brook Falls

© MARTIN SNICER



© GEOFF CLARK

Bulgandry Art Site

### ENJOY OUR BUSH TRACKS

Meandering along our wonderful bush tracks is a great way to spark your little ones' sense of adventure. If you're looking for a beginner track, why not head to Bouddi National Park where you can take on the short 600 m walk down to Lobster Beach (suitable for all ages, with a helping hand along the way) or the Flannel Flower walking track, which is about 2.5 km return (good for 4+).

For those aged around seven and up, Kariong Brook Falls at Kariong is perfect. They will enjoy the 6 km trail and be treated to a stunning waterfall at the end of the trek (weather-dependent).

We haven't forgotten those with prams. While not technically bushwalks, some of our favourite walking tracks wind along our waterways and through tree-canopied stretches of footpath. Our picks are Buff Point and Budgewoi Lake Foreshore walk, the Kincumber to Davistown loop or the Long Jetty Foreshore Reserve walk.

You could also visit Brisbane Water National Park and see the stunning Bulgandry Art Site Aboriginal Place. A flat 10-minute walk, that is both pram- and wheelchair-friendly, takes you through the National Park to the site of ancient Aboriginal rock art, something the whole family is bound to enjoy.

### FULL CIRCLE FARM TOURS

There are some great options for families to get onto a working farm and Full Circle Farm is among the top of our list.

Based at Kanwal, near Jillyby, it allows visitors to come and experience a working regenerative farm. There are plenty of animals for the young ones to get up close and personal with, while also being provided with incredible insights into different farming approaches.

They have cattle, pigs, and a few thousand poultry on the farm that are all protected by their good-natured guardian dogs.

Open tours are run once a month with dates varying depending on the weather and farm work constraints. Keep an eye on their socials or get in touch to hear more about dates and to book.

[fullcirclefarm.com.au](http://fullcirclefarm.com.au)





**SMALL BEACHES FOR SAFE SWIMS**

Finding a calm and safe place for the kids to roam and enjoy the water is a must for any summer adventure. The Haven at Terrigal is a top spot for families looking to let their kids roam free in safe surroundings, not to mention there are great lunch and coffee spots right there.

Ettalong Beach is another great pick with its calm waters, and long stretch of sand ready and waiting for families to laze the day away.

Putty Beach, however, is one of our favourite picks, tucked away in the National Park, it feels like you're stranded on a desert island, with vast views out of the bay and along its sandy banks. Check out the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service website for more information on secluded spots like Putty Beach.

[nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au)



Ettalong Beach



**BMX TRACKS**

Getting out into nature means different things to different people, while a bush walk works for some, if you're after something more active, then a BMX track might be better suited to you and the kids.

We have four BMX tracks across the Central Coast at San Remo, Umina, Long Jetty and Terrigal. Terrigal's track was redeveloped in 2021 and is now not only safe and functional but also meets Australian competitive standards.

So whether you're looking for a new hobby for your little ones to take up that builds their self-confidence, or simply looking to wear the kids out on an afternoon, BMX might be the sport you're looking for.

**ON THE WATER AT AVOCA LAKE**

Getting out on the water is an iconic Australian summer pastime. Not only is it the perfect spot to be when you're looking to escape the heat, but it's also great fun.

Aquafun at Avoca Beach has been operating in the area for more than 20 years and offers a fun day out for family members of all ages – and it has Advanced Ecotourism Certification. Take along a picnic and make a day of it, while also having access to modern human-powered pedalboats, kayaks and stand-up paddle boards.

There are also plenty of food and drink options nearby in the Avoca Beach village, and after you've tired everyone out with your lake fun, you have the option of beach or lake swimming to cool off in the heat.

[aquafun.net.au](http://aquafun.net.au)



# CENTRAL COAST SCHOOLS SNAPSHOT:

Schools that provide a rounded education to best prepare students for life after school.

## Central Coast Steiner School, Fountaindale

‘We offer a rich curriculum that celebrates the individuality of each student, promoting hands-on learning, artistic expression, and an appreciation for the interconnectedness of all knowledge. Our students flourish in an environment that encourages both personal development, academic growth and a sense of belonging,’ says Principal, Rosemary Michalowski.

Steiner’s primary school (Early Kindergarten to Year 6) nurtures academic achievement within a creative and supportive program. Its high school (Years 7 to 12) prepares students with meaningful and challenging learning incorporating skills such as collaboration, communication and critical thinking, and engaging students in a rich, vibrant learning pathway. The school is recognised for its holistic education, cultivating well-rounded individuals.

Students engage with a wide range of subjects such as Psychology, Business Management, Languages, English Language and Literature, Mathematics, Environmental Systems and Societies and Film Studies.

The school is currently taking enrolments for the IB Diploma (International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma program) in 2025 and will be the only IB Diploma school on the Central Coast. The IB Diploma offers unique benefits for students seeking a well-rounded and globally focused education, allowing them to explore their interests and passions.

The personalised structure of the school allows teachers to balance the, often, high expectations of students with genuine care and support.

**To find out more, visit [ccss.nsw.edu.au](http://ccss.nsw.edu.au) or call the school on 02 4362 3400 to make an appointment for a tour.**



**High School**  
Years 7-10

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## Our Lady Star of the Sea, Terrigal

The school strives to nurture well-rounded individuals who not only excel academically but also possess strong Catholic values, critical thinking abilities, and a sense of purpose. There is a focus on character education, instilling values such as kindness, empathy, and respect.

A diverse and challenging curriculum is designed to empower students with a strong academic foundation. The school's record of educational excellence has been reinforced by exceptional NAPLAN results in 2023.

Our Lady Star of the Sea believes its harmonious blend of dedicated teachers, specialist educators, a vibrant and inclusive community, and its affiliation with the Broken Bay Diocese is what helps set it apart from others.

Teaching staff strive to go the extra distance to create a nurturing and inspiring learning environment. Its specialist educators, including those in Japanese, music, and sports are held in high regard by the school for their expertise and unwavering passion in enhancing students' educational journeys.

Onsite counsellors provide essential support, to ensure students benefit from a comprehensive approach to education, but where their ongoing well-being is paramount.

There is a unique and reassuring pathway to ensure a smooth transition for students from the onsite preschool to primary, with secured spots awaiting them at one of the sought after Catholic High Schools.

**To find out more, visit [olssdbb.catholic.edu.au](http://olssdbb.catholic.edu.au) or call 02 7256 2119.**

# 2025 Admissions Open




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- ✔ Expertise in every note, move, and word: Specialised teachers in Japanese, Sport and Music
- ✔ Vast grassy playgrounds and state-of-the-art facilities for limitless learning and fun
- ✔ Unwavering commitment to academic excellence: Backed by outstanding NAPLAN results in 2023



OUR LADY  
STAR OF THE SEA  
PRIMARY SCHOOL TERRIGAL

Where Education is Centred in  
Catholic Compassion and Driven  
by Academic Excellence

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## St Joseph’s Catholic College, East Gosford

St Joseph’s provides a holistic secondary education for girls from Year 7 to 12. It is a non-selective, inclusive college that supports the learning needs of all students. It has a formal pastoral care and student wellbeing program, as well as teaching staff who strive to differentiate their teaching to accommodate the needs of every student.

A diverse curriculum encourages students to explore and engage in areas of special interest including creative and performing arts, humanities, technologies, sciences, mathematics and STEM courses.

The college produces consistently strong HSC results and achievements, with students featuring regularly on the Board of Studies Distinguished List, and most graduates pursuing higher education.

Combined classes are offered with St Edwards College, to expand the subject elective choices for seniors.

**Visit the school for an Open Afternoon to learn more about what an education at St Joseph’s has to offer: Monday, 4 March from 4 pm. Registration is essential. [sjcc.nsw.edu.au](http://sjcc.nsw.edu.au)**

## St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School, East Gosford

Recognised as a close-knit, supportive and nurturing school community, the school prides itself on an inclusive education where all students feel supported. Student well-being is aimed at developing the whole child: spiritually, academically, physically and socially.

Leadership programs, public speaking and debating, opportunities for inter-school and representative level-sport, and opportunities to learn a band instrument at school through the Central Coast Conservatorium of Music, as well as before- and after-school care and vacation-care are located on-site.

Year 6 transition programs to neighbouring St Edward’s and St Joseph’s.

The school has onsite ASPECT Satellite classes run by Autism Spectrum Australia which specifically caters for students on the Autism Spectrum.

St Patrick’s is also a very multicultural community, with one third of families originating from a background other than English. Specialised support is offered, including English as a Second Language, and the school celebrates the different holidays and cultural events for the various cultures within the school community.

**Visit St Patrick’s for Open Day to discover how they can help your children to learn and grow.**

**ST JOSEPH’S CATHOLIC COLLEGE**  
RUSSELL DRYSDALE ST, EAST GOSFORD




**JOIN US FOR  
OPEN AFTERNOON  
Monday 04 March 2024**

Meet our Principal, students and staff, and take a guided tour of our college from 4pm by appointment.



**SCAN HERE TO REGISTER**

**[sjcc.nsw.edu.au](http://sjcc.nsw.edu.au) | 02 7256 2137**

**ST PATRICK’S CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**




**WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN  
US FOR OPEN DAY:  
Tuesday 05 March 2024**

Morning session: 9:30am  
Evening session: 6:30pm

Tour our school, meet our teachers and students, and discover why St Patrick’s is the perfect place for your children to learn and grow.



**PLEASE SCAN HERE TO REGISTER**

**Cnr York & Melbourne St, East Gosford  
[spgddb.catholic.edu.au](http://spgddb.catholic.edu.au) | 02 7256 2113**



## Wyong Christian Community School, Wyong

Born out of a vision of the people at Wyong Baptist Church in 1993, the school sits on 28 acres of semi-rural property. Its student numbers and resources have grown steadily each year,

The school caters to Years K to 12 and is dedicated to creating an environment that holistically prepares students for their future. This includes nurturing qualities such as initiative, collaboration, self-discipline and ingenuity to enable students' individual growth and prepare them to become resilient, resourceful and engaged critical thinkers. The school consistently achieves within the top five Central Coast schools in the HSC.

At the school's heart is its aim to encourage students to not only achieve excellence in education but to flourish in their God-given gifts and potential, whether that is in sporting, creative and performing arts, leadership or academics.

Each staff member is a committed Christian, active in their local church and firmly committed to the vision of the school. They see their position as more than a job but rather, as a ministry.

**The school invites you for a personalised tour, welcoming you into their community. Learn more at [wyongccs.nsw.edu.au](http://wyongccs.nsw.edu.au)**





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SCAN FOR MORE INFO

51 - 52 The Esplanade Ettalong NSW 2257  
[www.ettalongdiggers.com](http://www.ettalongdiggers.com)



# Santa Claus has taken his seat at Erina Fair's new Christmas Castle.

Create memories that will last a lifetime with Santa Photography, Pet Photography and Sensitive Santa sessions.

Available from Saturday 11 November until Sunday 24 December.

SCAN TO BOOK



**Trolls are coming to Erina Fair!**

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ERINA FAIR





# Leave only footprints

The Central Coast offers superb natural beauty alongside a great sense of freedom, space and connection to the land.

From the beaches, waterways, ridges, estuaries, lakes and valley floors, to our parks, forests, reserves and natural bushland – locals and guests are all shaped by our unique natural environment.

We encourage our community and our guests to tread lightly and go slow on the NSW Central Coast these Summer Holidays.



Take the Central Coast sustainability pledge

**TAKE 3**  
FOR THE SEA

 **ECO**  
CERTIFIED   
DESTINATION  
nature tourism