

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Gold Coast Open House 2026 opens the doors to dams, research labs and residential homes across the city on 10 and 11 October.

GOLD COAST, QLD - Gold Coast Open House returns on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 October 2026, giving residents and visitors free access to buildings and spaces across the city that are normally closed to the public. This year's program pairs major public infrastructure with private homes selected for the quality of their design, offering a look at the ideas and people shaping the Gold Coast's built environment.

"Gold Coast Open House offers a rare opportunity to experience parts of the city that are not normally accessible to the public," said Mark Bagguley, Chair, Gold Coast Open House Committee. "This year's program brings together major infrastructure, research and education facilities, award-winning architecture and private homes. It's an opportunity to see these places first-hand, meet some of the people behind them and gain a better understanding of how our city is designed, built and sustained."

This year's confirmed program includes some of the region's most significant infrastructure. Hinze Dam opens to visitors, with SEQ water staff on hand to explain how the dam, first built in 1976 and expanded twice since, in 1989 and 2011, now supplies the bulk of the region's drinking water and manages flood risk along the Nerang River. At Tugun, the Gold Coast Desalination Plant gives visitors a look inside the reverse osmosis process that turns seawater into drinking water. Built in 2009 as one of the first large-scale desalination plants on Australia's east coast, the plant can supply enough water for around 300,000 homes a day when running at full capacity.

The Gold Coast Disaster and Emergency Management Centre returns to the program. The command hub is central to coordinating the city's response to floods, fires, cyclones and other emergencies. Completed in 2023 to replace a facility that had served the region for more than 30 years, the centre was purpose-built to withstand a category 5 cyclone.

On the education and research side, the program returns to Bond University's Abedian School of Architecture, the award-winning building by London-based CRAB Studio, led by Sir Peter Cook and Gavin Robotham. Completed in 2013, the school is conceived as a dynamic, vertically interconnected volume across three levels, organised around a central internal 'street' that rises gently with the hillside site. Designed for the Gold Coast's subtropical climate, the architecture encourages social interaction and the informal life of the school, extending from its gathering spaces to its colourful, bespoke free-form studio furniture.

Nearby at Griffith University, the Perry Cross Spinal Research Institute opens its doors for a look inside the labs working toward a human clinical trial for spinal cord injury treatment, a project founded by Gold Coast identity Perry Cross.

On the recreation front, the Palm Beach Aquatic and Community Centre recently won the FDG Stanley Award for Public Architecture, Queensland's top public architecture honour, at the 2026 Queensland Architecture Awards. Designed by Liquid Blu and Cox Architecture for the City of Gold Coast, the redeveloped centre adds four new pools to the original 50-metre pool built in the late 1970s, alongside a new community centre and expanded fitness facilities.

Harbour Shores is a new waterfront master-planned residential community close to Harbour Town, offering a mix of waterfront villas and mid-rise apartments set within a subtropical landscape, conceived as an integrated community where architecture, landscape and public spaces work together. Prior to residents moving into the first buildings, the architect will lead a guided tour of the development, providing an insight into the design thinking behind the buildings and masterplan.

The residential program includes The De Stijl House in Ashmore, The Slow Home Project in Currumbin Valley and Ute House in Southport.

The De Stijl House, Ashmore: What began as a modest renovation of a tired house in Ashmore evolved into an ambitious reimagining of how a home can respond to its owner, climate and site. The original layout was turned upside down, with kitchen, dining and living areas relocated to the upper level, opening onto tree canopies rather than neighbouring fences. A cathedral ceiling and northern and eastern openings fill the interior with light, while a window-free western façade corrects the original home's poor orientation. Ground-floor bedrooms open onto private courtyards softened by lush gardens, and a discreet, timber-lined entry reveals itself only to those invited inside. The home takes its name from the owner's De Stijl-inspired art collection, with bespoke

furniture drawing on the movement's geometry and proportions informed by the Fibonacci sequence.

The Slow Home Project, Currumbin Valley: Located at The Eco-Village at Currumbin, this is not so much a house as a series of ideas – a process rather than an end presentation or appearance, and a slowing down in the approach to home design and construction through consideration of connection, time, identity and affordability. Designed by ptmaARCHITECTURE, the project favours experience over style, finding pockets of joy amongst the “in-between spaces” and achieving more with less. In slowing down, the project recognises there is value in the experience of the home enjoyed along the way.

Ute House: A four-bedroom family home with a garden and pool, located in the Gold Coast suburb of Southport. Designed with modern living in mind, the home also features a fully functional, multi-person home office, combining work and life under one roof. Created by architect, author, and television personality Joe Snell, Ute House is both his personal family residence and architectural studio. It reflects a growing need to combine living and working environments within a single, highly adaptable space.

About Gold Coast Open House

Gold Coast Open House is a free, volunteer-run festival that gives the public access to buildings, homes and infrastructure across the city that are not usually open to visitors. It is run by a committee of local architects, designers and built environment professionals. Gold Coast Open House 2026 takes place on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 October.

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