

# STAY AND PLAY THE BYRON BAY REGION



*Resort and Lennox Head*

It has been more than thirty years in waiting, as the various sections have been patched together for the long promised motorway from Sydney to Brisbane. The new expressway from the Gold Coast to Ballina, complete with tunnels through the mountains, opened last year and created a whole new level of accessibility to both Brisbane and the Gold Coast for the Byron Bay region. The region is now flanked by the international airport on the Gold Coast and less than an hour's drive down the new expressway, a major regional airport at Ballina. Tourists are the big winners with competition driving airfares down and hire car tariffs plummeting.

This has coincided with the coming of age of a group of golf courses in the region, setting exemplary standards in course design, presentation and conditioning. The area, long having been a Mecca for retirees, has seen these golf clubs stay financially stable and re-invest in the primary asset - their golf course.

**Ballina and Murwillumbah**, despite the costs (reputed to be around \$40,000 each year) over-sow their Bermuda 328 greens every autumn with a special Poa Annu variety and for eight months of the year can boast to have some of the best-performing golf greens in the country. Every golfer should experience them at some time as they have just the right amount of holding power, run perfectly true and can be very fast. Both these Parkland courses have developed into "Must Play" status in recent times and Ballina in particular is renowned as the best conditioned course in the region.

**Ocean Shores Country Club** has invested heavily in their hilltop clubhouse and the magnificent facility is now

the focal point of their community overlooking their wonderful golf course to the West and the Pacific Ocean to the East. They have also continued improving their course condition and all greens are now a high performing TifEagle Bermuda variety. The Bruce Devlin & Robert von Hagge design retains its status as one of the most challenging designs in Australia with water coming into play on almost every hole and bunkers protecting the huge greens. Any serious golfer must play this course at some time in their life.

**Byron Bay Golf Course** well deserves the award for the most improved in the region. Extended from a nine-hole course about 25 years ago the new look course saw rapid changes in the last ten years, courtesy of a large cash injection from Gerry Harvey when he built the Byron at Byron Resort across the road and struck a deal with the club to resolve some waste water issues. This was a win/win for the club and it now has a terrific layout and far improved conditioning. The course has become known nationally in recent years as the venue for the PGA Australian Legends Tour Championship hosted every December and featuring some of our greatest Australian legends including Ian Baker Finch and Peter Senior.

**Coolangatta-Tweed Heads** has long been recognised as an outstanding golf facility with two 18 hole courses – the River Course and the newer West Course. The Coolangatta-Tweed Heads course was once a venue for many big time Australian professional golf tournaments. Gary Player regularly toured Australia back in the 60's and 70's and included the 12th and 13th holes on the River course in a book about his favourite holes in the world and they both still hold up



*The first hole at Ballina GC*

as outstanding tests. The course has recently invested heavily in their greens and now the bent greens that have always been doubtful in our sub-tropical climate have been replaced with a far better performing Bermuda 328 variety. You will not be disappointed with the outstanding layout and condition of either course when you play here.

Each of these golf clubs welcome visitors. However, they are in high demand for their own member competitions. This is where **Lennox Beach Resort** has found their niche in the market. Managed by keen golfers Judy and Steve Woodfield, the resort is located in the hub of the Northern Rivers in a gorgeous little beachside surfing village called Lennox Head, within easy driving distance of all the courses and both airports. With 40 quality four-star apartments surrounded by restaurants and cafes forming the "Eat Street" for the area this is the prime location for a golfing holiday base. Speak to Steve or



*Resort swimming pools*

Judy and plan your trip, tapping into their intimate local knowledge of the courses and the best days to play them. They will arrange and guarantee all your tee times at better than rack rates and package this with a brilliant accommodation deal at their beautiful resort. Bring your "swimmers" all year round as they brag the region has the best climate in Australia for golfers and the resort has a fabulous poolside Hot Jacuzzi, steam room and heated lap pool to rest those weary golfing muscles after your round.

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