

### Schizo Weather:

Queensland is touted as having weather that is “beautiful one day, perfect the next”. As far as weather goes across the state, some of those inland might have a few words to say about that and even those up north would be slightly choosier when describing the weather. However that doesn’t stop South East Queensland and the Sunshine Coast from having, often, very mild and pleasant weather.

There’s not much to complain about right? So, why is it that everyone has an opinion on how horrible the weather is here on the Gold Coast in particular?

It’s a popular small-talk topic just about anywhere you go, but it comes up so frequently here you’d think the weather was completely schizophrenic. “It’s so hot eh?” only to followed with “But last night it was so damn freezing!” which eventually leads to “And I’m sick of all this rain lately, geez!”

Ok ok, I’ll claim a bit of creative exaggeration in that exchange, but it’s not far off the mark. I understand a lot of people move here with the expectation that the weather is “better” than where they’re from (ie. Victorians and their “miserable” weather, NT ex-pats and their “sweltering” weather and so on), but the reality is, it’s a pretty darn mixed bag here.

It’s true, we’ll have in the space of one day a snap-freeze as the sun is rising, heavy showers all morning only to be capped off with a stifling humid afternoon with no breeze to be heard of. It’s rare, it’s weird and it’s the Gold Coast:

*“Beautiful one day, bizarre the next.”*

### Fashion ALA Bloke:

Melbourne prides itself in many ways on its fashion consciousness, Sydney and Brisbane on their more professional sensibilities. All of them have very interesting cliques and subcultures represented via the overt display of their fashion choices. They’re no Shibuya, but from the northern suburbs to the southern, you’re bound to run in to almost every kind of style of casual, whacky or formal.

And yet, in this day and age of the interweebs and blogomophones, with people exchanging their online details as casually as one would pass on their phone number; with friend networks extending across not only this nation but over international waters; how the heck did the Gold Coast become so relatively backward in its fashion sense?

Only recently has the “cotton printed hoodie” style started to fade, but like so many previous fashion crazes, it sticks around with a vengeance, causing me to flinch inwardly at the sight of Gold Coasts fashionista victims.

Turned up collars, faux-hawk haircuts (spiked haircuts for that matter), Capri-pants on guys (yeah I never got that one), authentic American baseball caps etc. etc. etc. I’m the first to admit I’m a tragic victim of my own laziness regarding “style”, but even I’m aware that these things died out long ago.

Many “blokes” manage to hobble along with the other pink-polo shirt wearing Aussie-flag tattooed clones that litter the Gold Coast, somehow remaining staunchly opposed to updating their perpetually lagging wardrobe. It probably doesn't help that many young guys work as tradesmen (a popular and still booming industry here) and are only as adventurous as the next bloke they work with.

Girls, I know you're at least paying some attention to things. Smack your man in the head and get him to burn the clothes that make him a fashion victim and school him in either developing his own look or in keeping up to date.

Guys, as the saying goes: “Either go hard or go home.” It applies the same here as anywhere else. Either read a magazine or visit a clothing shop every now and then, or find something you like and stick with it.

*I'm serious... People are still wearing pink polos with the collar turned up.*

### 24 Hour Pancakes:

We could soon be getting shops open 24 hours in Queensland. I am actually excited about this because it finally gives me hope for a problem that has absolutely baffled me about the Gold Coast ever since I joined the workforce.

If you're one of the unfortunate people who either: like to go out in the evening, work a shift that finishes between around 8pm-8am or are aged between 15-40, you've probably been annoyed at the inability to go shopping or get a decent meal late at night.

I've worked in retail for some time and it's frustrating to no end knowing that if you do a “closing” shift, you can guarantee that everywhere else is shut as well, meaning you either make a purchase at your local 24 hour service station (expensive and limited) or you buck up and pay for a meal at the casino (just plain expensive). And if you happen to work an early morning shift (like many of the emergency services, IT, service station, cleaners, council workers etc. etc.) you'll be familiar with needing to squeeze any available daylight time you can in to your day just to get to the shops.

One thing you'll learn on the Gold Coast is just how unfriendly the shopping is to anyone that doesn't work a typical 9-5pm weekday only schedule. Oh and lets not forget the unfortunate people who are holidaying here that become practically caged in their hotel rooms each evening, with nothing but overpriced t-shirt stores or condom shops to keep them entertained (don't worry, I'll talk about this another time).

I welcome 24 hour stores with open arms and I can only hope it leads to even more stores catering to the late-night crowd.

*Seriously, I hate having to drive up to Brisbane at 2am in the morning to get pancakes (but I do!)*

### State of Repair:

Suburban roads are known to get a little “rough” sometimes, I'll admit that no city is perfect on that accord, but what do you do when your entire city is a suburb? With CBD areas under a perpetual cloud of “maintenance”/”upgrade” or “modification”, arterial and major side-streets are left to moulder like the back roads of a country town, with potholes, painted over signs and even trees blocking visibility along roads.

There's plenty to enjoy about our wonderful city, in many ways the roads were well thought out, with it being almost impossible to get completely lost. Sure, we have a giant freeway down the middle that has caused communities to be left in virtual isolation without public transport (an issue i'll brush on another time), but it's better than NSW and Victoria. Apparently noone there has heard of an overpass for a highway... and triple roundabouts or hook-turns? No no no.

*I just think it gets old when your 5<sup>th</sup> hubcap pops off and gets lost while driving around town.*

### Council Divisions?:

Ok there's a bias here, I'm only interested in my division, which encompasses... Surfers Paradise through to Ashmore. Yeah, whacky much? And in all seriousness, it's not so much the dog-legged shape of our division that worries me so much as the thought that while roads and community services in the Ashmore area just manage to float, the bulk of our fees are being applied to that suckhole of funds that is Surfers Paradise.

I'm glad it's getting a shiny new coat; I'm glad the roadworks are **yet to be finished**; I'm glad to see new apartment and holiday resort complexes being given the thumbs up to revitalise the area...

But I'd be super glad if we could get some of the trees cleared along Ashmore Road, some better signage along roads like Yangoora Crescent (where many MANY young children are exposed to busy traffic walking home), I'd like that perpetual set of potholes along Currumburra Road and on the Cotlew Street roundabout...

*I'd like to stop feeling as though we're the Gold Coast Bulletin to someone's Courier Mail.*

### My Driving Is Skillful +++:

I've talked to a lot of people who hate Queensland drivers. If you move here or happen to take a trip out of state, you might understand what they're talking about. But this is a bit easy right? Just because people on the Gold Coast live in Queensland they have to be bad drivers? Most of the time they're no worse than anyone else in the state and eventually you get used to the Queensland-way-of-driving (tm).

This involves learning that the speed limit is only a guide and you should get a general idea of how fast to go by either 1) The Force or 2) Tailgating the person in front of you. You'll also learn that when a light turns red, you only stop if you're the fifth person through the lights after the change and when it finally turns green, you should either idle for 5s or wait until you can't read the plates of the person in front of

you before moving in the queue. There are many more quirks, but don't fret as you'll figure them out before tearing out all of your hair.

Where the Gold Coast comes in to its own is when any form of hazardous weather befalls our poor suburban city causing the normally Gizmo-esque Queensland educated drivers to blossom in to fully fledged Mogwai-schooled machines of death.

Small amount of rain to slick up the dusty roads? VROOOM! Lets keep going 10km/h over the speedlimit and stop at the last second.

Light to Heavy fog cover still persisting in the morning? Woops, I forgot where my headlights are, but don't worry, I'll hug your cars arse because I'm afraid of other drivers.

Heavy Rain? I can't see the speed limit, I guess I get to make it up!

I've driven from the Sunshine Coast to Coffs Harbor several times and I've always needed to stay frosty as soon as I see Dreamworld and at least until you're clear of the border and deep in to NSW.

*If we had better public transport I'd be glad to offload all that stress on to someone else instead :)*

Lets go crazy Gold Coast style!:

Hmm, I'm trying to think of what to do this weekend but I can't quite make up my mind. There's either the movies, the clubs or the cabarets. I might pop in to a comedy club, maybe check out the local theatre groups. I should probably stop off to see if the Gallery has any new works, pick up a flyer for the international cinema.

Aaaand then?

Almost every single one of these activities can be found in or directly around Surfers Paradise. Dare I go so far as to say it's the cultural center of our fair city-burb? Do we even have a culture to identify with outside of tourism, surfing and clubbing? Why do our talented artists work so hard to turn the heads of people on the Gold Coast, while heading up to Brisbane nets them communities and interest from enthusiast groups.

Community leaders on the Coast, including those who people would say are responsible **for** the cultural presence on the coast (community theatre and such) have petitioned our Council to consider forming a cultural hub, which has – to this date – remained a pipe dream that is unlikely to see the light of day. Apparently it's more beneficial to the cultural growth of the city to approve more zoning law defying structures than to build a community and public friendly theatre complex.

*Build it and they will come.*

Fuel:

I'll keep this short because noone listens anyway and despite the vocal outcry very little has actually been done to individually solve this problem.

Our wonderful little slice of paradise is rather lax when it comes to maintaining the quality of cars puttering around the streets. For at least two of my cars, I've considered that a blessing, with both barely (if at all) passing inspections. Both were horribly fuel inefficient (both were Leaded fuel vehicles) and I lamented them consistantly.

That was until I bought a car that wasn't made the same decade I was born in.

Now I hardly use any fuel and I'm laughing myself stupid with my fancy shmancy aircons and cd players (yeah... I be rollin').

Ditch the POS car you're driving or the 500 tonne 4WD you claim has "excellent milage" as you pour \$200 down its throat every week; stop acting like fuel is still \$0.60 a litre, driving around for every last thing around town at top speed and start considering less "cruises" for the hell of it.

Fuel is expensive and I feel your pain, just stop bemoaning it while you're practically the sole cause of complaint!

*Oh and 91 octane fuel may be cheaper, but you'd be surprised how much less you'll spend each week if you get the 95 like your manufacturer tells you to (yeah I'm looking at you **practically any car made after the turn of the century**).*

Pride isn't always a negative thing:

We're still a booming city, with tradecrafts continuing to remain the best financial choice for those looking for employment here. Getting an apprenticeship or even training may be another matter altogether, but if you start young, work hard, you should land on your feet just fine.

With so many jobs still available due to the mount of work still out there, being choosy about who you get to complete that paint job, repair work, cabling, electrical work and so on is the fastest way to see it take months to get done (possible exaggeration... possibly).

So now you've bitten the bullet, hired a guy who'll do the job for cheap (albeit to avoid requiring accreditation) and he's happy for the work, you're happy the work is done, so everyone is happy right? Until you realise he splattered paint over your plants and there doesn't seem to be as many coats as you thought you'd need for an outside job.

It's expensive here for a reason and if you can't trust the cheaper people, it's worth a wait for the moderate price. Hardly sage advice, but it's just too damn common a complaint.

*Buyer beware.*

Retail Rant Corner:

“Sorry about the shrappers.”

“Man I'm glad I got rid of all that shrapnel.”

STOP IT.

Please. For the love of all that is holy, erase that word from your minds like you have with “speed limit”, “standard drink” and “thanks; no problem; have a nice day too!”.

Say it with me now: “Change”, “Silver”, “Gold”, “Notes”.

Repeat.

As a guide, open your wallet, take out a note. Open your ashtray, get out all the silver in it (NOT SHRAPNEL), grab a gold piece from your pocket.

Now point to each as you say it: “Change” everything in front of you; “Silver” that stuff you keep in a jar until you have at least \$20 of it or enough to purchase cigarettes (whichever comes first); “Gold” also referred to as “I guess I've been to the pokies eh? Ha ha ha.” also the stuff you use to buy newspapers with; “Notes” rarely seen as anything other than in the \$50 denomination because “that damn ATM never gives me twenties”, also a convenient form of payment for chewing gum, matches and a chuppa-chup (normally at the same time).

Repeat until you're as sick of it as I am of the words “shrappers” and “shrapnel”.

*No really, stop it.*

When's the next bus?!:

Every 30 minutes on a weekday and every hour on the weekends. You might need to transfer in Southport or Pacific Fair to get where you're going, unless it's north Gold Coast, in which case you better start walking from the train station now.

You might want to show up 10 minutes before the bus arrives, but thanks to our wonderfully quirky drivers, the bus may not show up until 10 minutes after.

(Oh and in all seriousness, stop screwing with the drivers, most of the time it's not their fault public transport sucks and often it's a near miracle they get there at all and that they don't beat half of the teenagers with a brick preemptively).

That all-day pass you bought is a godsend, because you'll be safe in the knowledge that you'll get your monies worth after spending a day getting “there” and “back”.

Take at least enough money for the maximum amount of zone-crossing, often heading down one street will incur this penalty entirely, while a trip “half way to Sydney” doesn't cross any and may even be considered free for your trouble.

*I guess this is why we drive everywhere.*