

Lorna Willis, Roz White among Sunshine Coast's female developers

From developers to town planners, these Sunshine Coast women are kicking goals in the property and construction industry. See how they're leaving their mark on a male-dominated field:



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November 10, 2021 - 1:07PM

In the largely male-dominated industry of property and construction, a handful of women are leading the way when it comes to leaving their mark and kicking development goals.

The property and construction industry has historically been a male-dominated sector, with women making up 15 per cent of construction workers in 2020, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Despite this, an increasing amount of women are starting to become involved, with a rise of five per cent over the past five years.

The *Sunshine Coast Daily* spoke to some female developers who are working on major projects throughout the region and can now reveal out how they got a foot in the property door.

Meet the hardworking women behind the Sunshine Coast development industry below.

LORNA WILLIS, WOW GROUP

Lorna Willis started her property development journey at the young age of 18, when she purchased her first block of land.

With a passion for property and design, Ms Willis decided to study architecture after having children and was the only female in her class.

“I actually got knocked back because I was a woman with four children so I got in the back door by going to night school and I proved them wrong,” Ms Willis said.

“I got high distinctions and then they started using me as an example for the guys.”



Sunshine Coast developer Lorna Willis.

After moving to the Sunshine Coast eight years ago, Ms Willis started to develop property and is now working on a \$95 million project, the Lowanna Beach Resort.

Ms Willis also started a group for women in the development industry called Wow Property Women where she helps more than 500 members gain confidence and get their foot in the door.

“If a woman can get in there and do her job well and deliver a great product, she is able to set herself up for the same returns as a man,” she said.

Ms Willis is also using her position to create change for homeless people by donating tents to those in need.

She said she loved that by developing property, she was delivering housing which was in short supply.

“It’s nice to be a part of the solution,” she said.

ROZ WHITE, WHITE’S IGA GROUP

Roz White and her husband Michael started out their retail journey on the Coast with the purchase of a small convenience store in Maroochydore.

Roz White is the co-owner of White’s IGA Group and has developed five stores on the Sunshine Coast.

These include the newly constructed SUPA IGA at Baringa, SUPA IGA at Bli Bli, IGA Mooloolah, IGA Mt Coolum and IGA Peregian Beach.



Roz White.

Together they also developed the Bli Bli Village town centre and are part owners of the Forest Glen Village Centre.

Ms White said she loved being part of the design process and creating spaces where people could socialise and come together as a community.

“It’s definitely been a male-dominated industry, but there a lot of incredibly clever women who are starting to emerge in this space which is great to see,” she said.

“It’s been great to see women stepping into this industry and embracing it. Women certainly have a lot to contribute.”

BROOKE BASTIEN, MURPHY BUILDERS

Brooke Bastien started working at her family construction firm of Murphy Builders as she had a passion for development and before she knew it she was running her own projects.

She is now an owner of the business and is working on projects around the Sunshine Coast including a 29-unit mixed-use development that has just been approved.

The project at 97 Brisbane Road and 5 Bindaree Crescent, Mooloolaba includes a shop and/or food and drink outlet, with seven tenancies proposed for the office space and six tenancies for the food and drink outlet space.



Brooke Bastien

“There were a lot of stakeholders involved so we’re really excited to bring that one to the market in the future,” Ms Bastien said.

“I love watching a project go from acquisition right through to completion and standing back and seeing the completed product.”

Ms Bastien said she got great satisfaction from playing a part through the whole process of a development and believed women have a lot to offer the industry.

“Three of the girls here, including me, have won women in building awards,” she said.

“It’s exciting that we’re seeing more and more women getting involved.”

SOPHIE WILLIAMS, WALKER CORPORATION

Sophie Williams is a principal town planner who works for Walker Corporation and has been involved in multiple Sunshine Coast developments.

After growing up in the Sunshine Coast hinterland town of Maleny and spending years away to gain education and experience, Sophie has returned home to the coast and is now working on the visionary Maroochydore City Centre development.

“I have a love for spaces that impact people’s daily lives and I am interested in how you can affect the way people live through their built environment,” Ms Williams told the *Sunshine Coast Daily*.



Sophie Williams, Walker Corporation

“To be a part of a legacy project such as the Maroochydore City Centre, makes me proud to be a woman working in property on the Sunshine Coast.

“As a planner, I love seeing the buildings that are created as a result of your work and being able to use and enjoy the places that I’ve had a hand in planning.”

Ms Williams said her time in the male-dominated industry had been challenging, especially when she was early in her career.

“When I was younger I felt as though you had to prove your worth at the table. I often had to remind men I wasn’t there to take minutes,” she said.

“Now I make sure that any other women I work with know that I am there to work with them and not against them.”

KIRSTIN JUNIPER, CUBE DEVELOPMENTS

Kirsten Juniper is a director for Cube Developments, which she established alongside Scott Juniper.

Mrs Juniper manages the strategy and financial wellbeing of Cube Developments, with years of experience behind her and business-management skills.



Kirsten Juniper

She previously worked in commercial real estate with a national agency, which provided her with the ability to identify and analyse new business.

AMANDA BULOW, AWIC

Amanda Bulow has more than 20 years' experience in the construction industry and is the founder of Awesome Women in Construction (AWIC).

Ms Bulow provides a space for women to come together to learn, connect and share while leading the growth of the construction industry.



Amanda Bulow

She has worked in estimating, procurement and project management.

As stated on the AWIC website, Ms Bulow left the corporate world in late 2019 to focus on positioning AWIC as a leading influence for women the construction industry.

“I am incredibly proud and excited for the future of AWIC,” Ms Bulow said.

LIZ LEADBETTER, LEADBETTER PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS

Liz Leadbetter and her husband Shane run their business together and enjoy a trusted reputation for their ability to deliver exceptional quality in their Sunshine Coast developments.

Ms Leadbetter has extensive experience in the development of luxury homes, industrial properties and apartments.



Liz Leadbetter

“Our passion to deliver premium developments allows us to embrace the property industry elite, giving our projects the successful edge that keeps the Leadbetter Group ahead of the curve,” their website says.

Ms Leadbetter said she believed that the beauty of the natural coastline could be mirrored with inspiring architecture that could be enjoyed generation to generation.

HANNAH MADILL, STOCKLAND

Hannah Madill is the development manager for Stockland and previously worked as a town planner for the Noosa Council.



Hannah Madill

Some of Ms Madill's projects include the \$300 million Viridian Noosa project, Birtinya at Oceanside, Bells Reach and Aura.

Ms Madill was presented the National UDIA award for Affordable Housing for The Bower Series at Bells Reach, as well as the State UDIA award for Best Community, again for Bells Reach.