



MORE THAN *modular*

WORDS LUCINDA DEAN

FOR MANY AUSTRALIANS, the term ‘modular home’ still conjures outdated stereotypes: cramped dongas, temporary transportable cabins or basic mining accommodation built for function rather than lifestyle.

But on the Sunshine Coast, Oly Homes is reshaping that perception entirely, proving that modern modular housing can be design-led, highly customisable and genuinely aspirational family living.

That shift is immediately obvious inside the multi-award-winning company’s display home at Yandina. Named Airlie, it is a three-bedroom, two-bathroom residence that has the confidence of a contemporary designer home with its sculptural lines, warm finishes and generous proportions that feel anything but temporary.

Sunlight pours into open-plan living spaces, an oversized verandah extends the footprint outdoors and every detail feels carefully considered.

For many first-time visitors, the reaction to the space is immediate.

“When customers come through the display home, their first comment is generally, ‘Oh, wow!’” says owner Dale Funston.

Oly Homes’ Carly Turner says that moment of surprise speaks volumes about how modular housing is still misunderstood.

“People don’t automatically think modular means modern and beautiful,” she says. “Then they walk in and realise, ‘Oh, you do actually have the nice floors that I like, this is airy and I can do that in the kitchen’. You see people having the realisation that this could actually work for them.”

Founded in 1972 and owned by Dale for the past 16 years, Oly Homes has been leading the Australian modular housing pack for decades.

“When we first bought the business, modular homes were basically still called dongas,” Dale says. “They were small, basic and rough – purely fit for purpose. As the years have progressed, we’ve changed that completely, tipped it right on its head.”

Today, Oly Homes designs and constructs everything from one-bedroom granny flats to expansive five-bedroom family homes, remote

“THE FASTER
PEOPLE CAN
GET INTO
THEIR HOMES,
THE BETTER”

workforce accommodation and custom builds.

The company is even preparing its first two-storey residential modular home on a sloping block at Yandina Creek – a project Dale says grew directly from a client’s vision.

“The customer wanted two-storeys, so we sat down together and worked through it,” he says. “That’s one of the bonuses with what we do, you can change whatever you want.”

While Oly Homes offers around 20 standard designs, buyers can modify layouts, reposition kitchens, alter finishes and personalise homes to suit specific sites and lifestyles. The company’s architectural and engineering teams ensure every design remains structurally sound and council compliant.

At a time when many traditional home builds are plagued by lengthy delays, labour shortages and rising costs, Oly Homes’ factory-based construction model offers both speed and certainty.

Homes are built in sections inside the company’s Yandina and Cooroy facilities, where trades, architects, engineers and builders work onsite every day in weather-protected conditions.

“They’re literally made in two halves in the factory, complete with kitchen, bathrooms and laundry intact and transported by truck to the destination one half at a time,” Dale explains.

Carly likens the installation process to “putting together giant Lego pieces”.

“If you were to crane this [the display home] onto a site in the morning, it would look like a



finished house by the afternoon,” she says. “They would just have a few things to tweak after that, like doing the verandah handrailing the next day.”

The company handles all council and building approvals on behalf of homeowners, helping simplify what can be a stressful and lengthy process. Once approvals are complete, the average construction timeframe sits around eight to 12 weeks, whereas a traditional build of an equivalent-sized and quality home is eight to 12 months.

This faster turnaround can be particularly valuable for Sunshine Coast families trying to enter a tricky housing market where new-build homes are in short supply.

Carly believes Oly Homes delivers in terms of speed, flexible design, build quality and reduced construction stress. Financing options have also improved significantly, with modular homes now eligible under major bank lending programs.

“The faster people can get into their homes, the better,” she says. “You’ve got to pay both rent and your home loans while you’re building.”

Oly Homes’ modular approach also excels in remote and difficult-to-access locations. The company has delivered projects throughout far north Queensland and the Torres Strait, including work on Thursday Island, Mornington Island and defence housing projects in Weipa.

In 2025, Oly Homes received multiple major building awards for its Thursday Island development, which involved manufacturing cyclone-rated modular homes on the Sunshine Coast before transporting them more than 1700 kilometres north for installation.

That year, the project won the Master Builders Queensland Award for Prefabricated and Modular Housing, along with regional Housing Industry Association and Master Builders Far North Queensland awards.

Strength and durability remain central to the company’s reputation. Oly Homes uses Australian Bluescope steel framing and robust structural systems designed to withstand both cyclones and termites.

“One of the questions we get asked all the time is whether they’re cyclone-rated,” Carly says. “The winds the homes face on the back of the truck during transport is equivalent to a category two cyclone and still they arrive intact.”

Dale recalls one Mission Beach project which



endured Cyclone Yasi. “All the other houses were gone and we were still standing,” he says. “It simply lost a bit of guttering.”

Plans are afoot for a larger Caloundra factory that will significantly expand production capacity.

The move reflects not only the company’s success but a broader shift occurring across the Australian housing market.

More homeowners are beginning to understand that modular housing is no longer a compromise. According to Carly, Oly Homes’ brand promise, ‘more than modular’, is simply about understanding that anything’s possible.

“It’s not just a box, it’s a home, it’s a space where my family can live,” she says. “It’s a house that I can design the way I want it. It’s going to be somewhere where we can live and we can have the lifestyle we want.”

For Oly Homes, it’s about extending that dream and reality to its customers and letting them know that a modular home can be the home of their dreams. 🌟

olyhomes.com.au