

# Local Food Innovators: Pauly Mac

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Paul McDonald (aka Pauly Mac) has been in commercial kitchens for more than three decades and has experienced every element of the hospitality industry, from the burger joint around the corner to Michelin-starred restaurants and everything between.

A commercial cookery teacher, restaurant judge, author, chef, trainer and food industry consultant, we recently caught up with Pauly Mac to find out about his legendary **Park Life Pop-Up** in Terrigal and his plans for the future of food on the Central Coast.

## **How did you become involved in the food and hospitality industry?**

I've been a chef for 30 years around the world, with 16 years here in Australia. The majority of my career has been in high-end establishments, but for the last six years I've been consulting to big industry groups, as well as small independents on concept, launch and success within the food world.

## **What is the best part about your job?**

I love every part of my job. I work with billion-dollar companies on one hand, as well as single-person operations every day. One moment I'm presenting to hundreds of VIPS, then hours later I'm pouring coffees at Park Life. Every day is different and it never gets boring.

## **What advice would you give anyone else looking to enter the food and beverage industry?**

Ha! Good question...make sure you've done your sums!

## **Park Life Pop Up Coffee was originally intended as a temporary service at Terrigal Rotary Park. How did this become a permanent fixture?**

Thanks to a massive groundswell of community support, we decided to negotiate a lease to help activate this important recreational and community space. People were obviously happy with what we were offering and wanted us to stay.

## **Why do you think quality cafés are such an important part of community culture?**

A quality café is a hub for the community - a meeting place and part of the social fabric of the community. Our aim with Park Life is to offer a vibrant, community-based, forward-thinking kiosk that brings people together and continues to serve quality food and beverage offerings.

**The local food scene on the Central Coast has changed a lot in recent years. What have you found to be the biggest changes?**

There's a much greater awareness of locality and seasonality these days. We're surrounded by amazing food, yet some people still take the easy route, don't use the seasons and write a menu first then source the products, rather than opening up to what's around and building a menu from there. However; this is definitely changing and the industry as a whole is gaining a much greater awareness of how to correctly produce incredible, local, seasonal food.

**Where are some other local establishments you love to eat at?**

Scotty at Yellowtail is killing it - producing really beautifully put together, intelligent food. Fisherman's Wharf at Woy Woy is modern brilliance, Pizza Tropicana is amazing and I see Gosford changing every day.

**What are your plans for the future for Park Life Pop Up Coffee?**

Our expansion starts in August. We're committed to moving forward with our amazing community partners: Roundabout Circus, Little Kickers, Art in the Park, Babyrave, Ace Face Painting by Grace, The Serenity Files, Dance Adventure, Contramestre Biscoito Capoeira, Bootcamp OBC, WA Yoga, Chika Heart-to-Heart Storytelling, Sons of Obiwan, and Frankie & Harry photography - just to name a few - to create an amazing space and place where the community can come together and be a part of something really special.



## FIND OUT MORE

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