



# Queensland Lifestyle

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SUNSHINE COASTERS: Michelle and Clay Sweeney with children Dane, Emma and Blake.

Picture: FRON-LEE QUIMBY

## Families find headland of milk and honey

By **MICHELLE SINGER**  
PROPERTY WRITER

FORMER Sydneysiders Michelle and Clay Sweeney, like many of their neighbours at Alexandra Headland, relocated to the Sunshine Coast in search of a new lifestyle.

More than 30,000 people moved to Queensland in 2005, cementing its spot as the

most popular interstate migration destination. And while the movement of southerners has been well documented for a number of years, there is little sign of the tide abating.

Queensland Government predictions for Brisbane, south-east Queensland and Far North areas such as Mackay and Cairns are that the population will double in the next 20 years.

While most of that growth is likely to come from the 40-plus age group, younger families

such as the Sweenys are attracted to the still-affordable areas up north for lifestyle, health and financial reasons.

The young couple, with children Blake, 15, Emma, 13, and Dane, 5, embarked on a sea change 18 months ago when they moved from Orchard Hills in western Sydney.

They spent months researching the Sunshine Coast for the ideal location, settling on a block of land in the Sanctuary housing development,

about 300 metres from the beach. Last year they moved into their five-bedroom home, designed by Mrs Sweeney, which has large casual living, dining and entertainment spaces, a deck, guest accommodation and a pool.

Best of all, the home maximises their picture-postcard rainforest garden.

"We have always holidayed at the Sunshine

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# Headland of milk and honey

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Coast and loved it," Mrs Sweeny said. "The climate and the atmosphere are great. We thought it was a good area for the kids - to do their last years of their upbringing here.

"We lived in a country-style home in Sydney so wanted a modern beach look. The land attracted us because of the beach and Alexandra Headland is a great spot. With the shopping, fantastic schools and cafes, it's got everything a growing family needs."

The family still operate a Sydney-based transport company from their Sunshine Coast home, finding technology an easy way to keep in touch with business.

Mr Sweeny travels back to Sydney up to four times a year for work, while friends and family are always visiting as Maroochydore Airport is only 15 minutes' drive away.

Although the initial price of land was slightly more than the family expected, the location and style of property was far more affordable than something comparable in Sydney.

"We were a little bit shocked," Mrs Sweeny said. "It was more than we thought it would be. There's been a boom and we missed the boat by a couple of years, but for what we have so close to a good beach, with no crowds, there's no way we could have built something like this in Sydney."