

IDEAS ON ICE

THE GOLD COAST MAY BE THE POLAR OPPOSITE OF ANTARCTICA, BUT THESE SAVVY BUSINESS MEN AND WOMEN BELIEVE IT'S THE PERFECT PLACE TO COME UP WITH THE BEACHSIDE CITY'S NEXT RED-HOT VENTURE

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There's nothing like breaking the ice with a story about that time Geoff Wilson dragged a giant replica of his wife's breasts across Antarctica.

The Currumbin vet raised \$200,000 for the McGrath Foundation and broke a world record for the fastest solo crossing of the icy continent.

It's funny how when you start off with a tale like that how quickly your audience warms to the idea of taking more than a hundred of Australia's brightest business minds and shipping them off to the frigid continent for an ideas fest.

Julio De Laffitte is a maker of millionaires, advising others how to find their fortunes after building his own through bricks and mortar investments – purchasing property across the

country, Gold Coast included, until he had a portfolio worth more than \$40 million.

Julio is the founder of Unstoppables, the brainstorming session on ice, throwing a lazy \$15 million of his own money at a venture so crazy it just might work. It was almost inevitable Geoff would be drawn into the scheme, irresistibly pulled to the magnetism of the South Pole, and he plans on taking as many Gold Coasters along for the ride as possible.

"Julio approached me not long after I got back from Antarctica in February. I was excited about it from the outset," Geoff says.

"I think for anyone, whether they're an entrepreneur or not, it is an amazing place to go.

"I liken it to the waiting room of God. It's the most soul-searching, clear-thinking place. All

the colour is stripped away by the landscape – it's the perfect place to have a think tank."

Unlike Geoff's last visit to Antarctica, where he lay alone in a blizzard dreaming for 53 days about the steak and beer he'd have when he clawed his way home, this trip will be conducted in five-star luxury. The group will set sail from Chile on Australia Day, returning 11 days later with a boat brimming with ideas.

"This dream I'm supporting, the dream another man has to raise the financial intelligence of Australia, is important.

"The pioneering spirit that got us this far as Australians, when it comes to adventure, is starting to die and we need to do something about it."

Helping Geoff to rally the Gold Coast

business community for the adventure is entrepreneur Jacki Hendy. So far, 65 of the 117 spots have been filled, with 20 of those lining up to network in subzero temperatures coming from southeast Queensland.

While the cost of the trip will be a drop in the ocean to many of the established business people attending, with tickets for the voyage starting at \$16,000, for those still on the bottom rungs of the corporate ladder it's a gamble.

One person who knows about taking chances is Jacki. While many people still remember her as the wife of Ironman legend Trevor Hendy, it's what she's done since moving on from their marriage that's defined her as a business woman.

She started her corporate networking business, New Beginnings, in the aftermath of



losing her partner of nine years Paul Botica, co-founder of Byrning Spears, in 2012.

"I'm at where I am in my life because I lost my partner to cancer," Jacki says.

"After going through a crisis and a loss it inspired me to have a go and make my dreams come true through choosing to live with passion and purpose and make a difference."

Jacki, who knew Geoff years ago but had lost touch until recently, says the trip is about strengthening business ties new and old as well as making sure new ventures actually happen once the ship docks.

The Unstoppables team will be profiling all the attendees to make sure the right people, whether it be a young whiz kid with technological smarts or an experienced investor

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with the cash to splash on an opportunity, are put together during the planned on-board workshops and lectures.

"I'd known Geoff years ago, he was my family vet, and it's really interesting how this project brought us together from the past. The

excitement of launching the Unstoppables movement is something I didn't realise was on my bucket list until it was.

"We're removing our everyday reality and routines to go to this pristine place where we can come together and think differently. I think it will offer a lot of clarity."

One person who can't wait to jump on board is Craig Chapman, a former Greencross Vets chief financial officer who retired at 50 to concentrate on playing the stock market, sit on the boards of various companies and do his bit for the community as Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club president. He's no stranger to daring escapades, raising \$90,000 for charity by swimming the English Channel solo in 2011.

"There are things business needs to do to

continue to grow and survive and really, for Australia's future to continue to be rosy. The past decade or so there's been a situation where the resources sector only represents 10 per cent of the economy but has provided a third of the economy's growth," Craig says.

"When we rely so heavily on something like that, when there's a hiccup there's a lot of ramifications so we've got to find something else.

"So for me, I'm just a paying punter who believes there's value in something like this."

The Unstoppables invite everyone from start-ups to CEOs to join them on their Antarctica adventure. There is also the chance for one person to win a scholarship to join them. Visit unstoppables.com.au