

Lachlan Smart given key to the city after record flight



[Roxanne McCarty-O'Kane](#) | 27th Aug 2016 6:43 AM Updated: 8:40 AM



Lachlan Smart is given a key to the Sunshine Coast by mayor Mark Jamieson Roxanne McCarty-O'Kane

8:25AM: Lachlan Smart has been given a key to the city of the Sunshine Coast by mayor Mark Jamieson.

Lachlan has become the third young person to receive the key in recent years, following solo sailor Jessica Watson and wildlife warrior Bindi Irwin.

Cr Jamieson said that, in a journey that saw him travel 45,000kms over 15 countries, he managed to beat the Guinness world record for the youngest pilot to circumnavigate the world in a single-engine aircraft by 358 days.

Representing Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, federal member Ted O'Brien said he had done the country and the Sunshine Coast proud.



Lachlan's support crew Roxanne McCarty-O'Kane

Not only did Lachlan receive a key to the Sunshine Coast and a world record this morning, he was also given a priceless handwritten letter from aviation legend Bert Hinkler.

The unexpected gift rendered the 18-year-old speechless.

Beerwah resident Roger Reilly said he had been inspired by Lachlan's drive, determination, and spirit, and thought he would be the perfect guardian of the letter, which had been in his family for 80 years.

Bert wrote the letter to Roger's grandfather, Garnet Hungerford, in 1928, thinking him for his fan mail.

"When I heard that Lachlan was a big fan of Bert's, I knew I had found the best new home for the letter, which has been hanging on my wall for years," Roger said.

Since touching down from an hour-long flight from Bundaberg at 7:30am, Lachlan has enjoyed a rock-star welcome and has not been short of words of thanks to his supporters and messages of encouragement to youngsters with dreams of their own.

Despite this, he was lost for words when presented with the framed letter.

7:31AM: Lachlan Smart has touched down.

"It's amazing to be back, it's unbelievable," he said.



Roxanne McCarty-O'Kane

Calls of "On ya, Lachie!" and "Love you, Lachie" are flying from an adoring crowd as Lachlan officially becomes the youngest person to circumnavigate the world in a single-engine aircraft.

"I don't have the words to describe how I'm feeling right now," he said.

7:25AM: Soon after Ryan Campbell landed his then record-breaking solo circumnavigation of the world, a bright-eyed Lachlan Smart contacted him after being inspired by the feat.

At the time, Ryan was the world record holder and was the last Australian to hold the honour, until today.

Almost three years later, Ryan has become a mentor to Lachlan and shared support both in the lead up to and throughout his life-changing flight.



Ryan Campbell, Lachlan Smart's mentor and the last Australian to hold the title that Lachlan now has.

Ryan is among the crowd of supporters today and said he looked forward to "sharing a beverage" with Lachlan once the excitement had died down.

"He has a good head on his shoulders, so I hope he uses this experience to inspire and help other young people," he said.

"He has been living to the maximum that any 18-year-old could over the last eight weeks, so it will be hard to slow right down (in coming home)."

Crowds are now on the tarmac with the Nambour Christian College band belting out some energetic tunes.



Roxanne McCarty-O'Kane

7.11AM: Excitement at seeing her son after eight long weeks has brought Vanessa Sprague to tears.

Speaking with the media before Lachlan Smart's landing, Ms Sprague said she was preparing to give her son the biggest hug.

"I don't think there will be any words," she said as tears rolled down her cheeks.

"I just want that hug and people might have to pry me off him so he can move on to something else."

Ms Sprague said she was amazed at the number of people who had turned out to welcome her son home from his solo navigation of the world.

"It will be a nice surprise for Lachie to see the number of people here to congratulate him," she said.

As the honorary ground marshall, Ms Sprague will guide Lachlan to his parking spot at Sunshine Coast Airport and will be front and centre as he sets foot on home soil.

Once the morning's events are complete, Ms Sprague said she looked forward to having a quiet night with Lachlan playing board games after many weeks of worry.



Roxanne McCarty-O'Kane

6.43AM: SUNSHINE Coast Airport is starting to fill up with media and spectators as Lachlan Smart prepares to make his historic landing after more than 50 days flying solo around the world.

The Nambour 18-year-old set off on July 4 and will today break the Guinness world record set by Matt Guthmiller, who circumnavigated the world aged 19 years, seven months and 21 days.

There is a real buzz at the international terminal as Lachlan's arrival draws near.

Extracted from:

<http://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/news/airport-fills-lachlan-smarts-record-flight-approac/3082708/#/0>

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