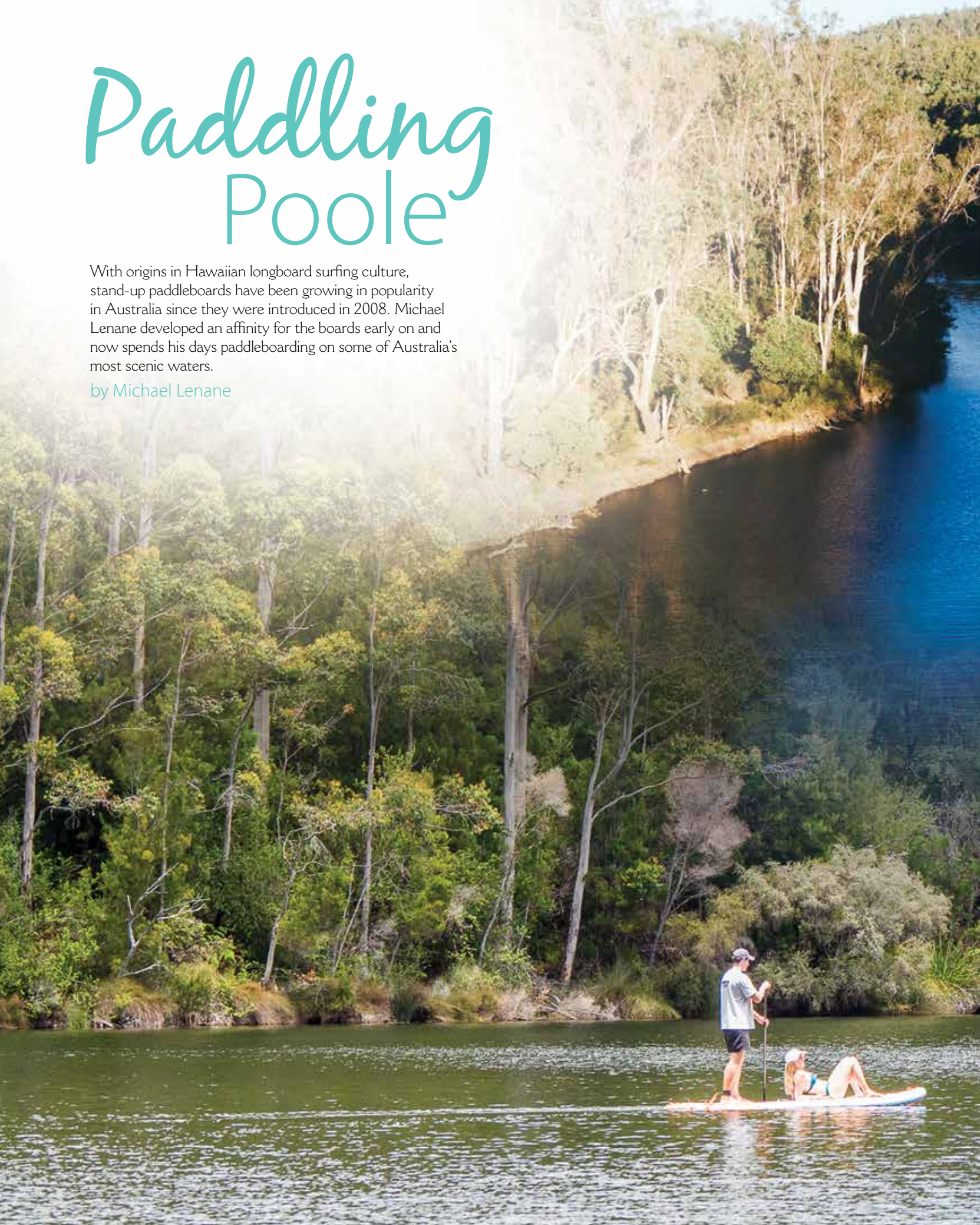


Paddling Poole

With origins in Hawaiian longboard surfing culture, stand-up paddleboards have been growing in popularity in Australia since they were introduced in 2008. Michael Lenane developed an affinity for the boards early on and now spends his days paddleboarding on some of Australia's most scenic waters.

by Michael Lenane





The sound of my alarm, a familiar song enters the end of my dream. It's time to wake up. We are going on an adventure today. My morning officially begins with the smell of brewed coffee, the sizzle of eggs hitting the pan, the crackle of bacon and the golden-brown burn of my hash brown. A quick feed as we pack the car. It is now that the sun decides to peek out from behind the cold hills in the east.

As we pull out of the driveway, we can feel the immediate release from stress that city living can create. Heading down the highway, exciting chats, tunes and good times ensue. Before we know it, we've hit Dwellingup. A slow descent through the cold morning mist, and tall trees that surround us guide our entry into Lane Poole Reserve echo the sound of the tyres crackling on the red gravel road. We are getting close to camp.

SIMPLE ESCAPE

We park up close to the water and there is not an unnatural sound to be heard. The beautiful calls of a flock of stunning red-tailed black cockatoos fill the air. Their sounds filter down from the top of the 20-metre-tall trees that line the banks of the Murray River. We make sure we use the purpose-built river access steps (located at Dwaarlindijiraap and Chuditch for water sports such as stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking and canoeing), our stand-up paddleboards

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Above Lane Poole Reserve, Dwellingup.

Photo – Tourism WA

Below Paddling is relaxing in national parks.

Photo – Cliff Winfield



Discover more about
Stand Up Paddling in
WA waters

Scan this QR code or
visit Parks and Wildlife
Service's 'LANDSCOPE'
playlist on YouTube.





(SUPs) enter the water and we take our first strokes upstream. We honestly forget what year it is, what day it is and where we are. Absolutely captivated by the pure beauty of this natural environment, the experience is a true privilege.

It feels like we've stepped back in time hundreds of years and we are now the only people on the planet. Words really do no justice to the raw untouched beauty that we are immersed in.

The reflections on the water make it difficult to tell where the water ends, and the earth begins. Like a pond, these pure mirror-like images of the sky and trees cover our path as we travel further away from our starting point. We must have spent two hours on the water exploring this breathtaking wilderness.

Such a small investment has yielded results far beyond our expectation. To make this trip happen was surprisingly

easy. An hour and a half from the city, this experience only cost us half a day of our time and about a third of a tank of petrol and we return to our hectic city lives in a more relaxed and calm state. We have a deeper appreciation for what makes life rich—nature, the people in your life, and the experiences that you share with them.

SUP HISTORY

In the 1950s a small group of Hawaiian surfers started paddling onto waves using longboards and outrigger paddles. Footage exists of these same Hawaiian surfers paddling tourists onto small crumbling waves with the large boards-and-outrigger paddle combination.

Fast forward almost 50 years to the mid-2000s and a few Hawaiian surfing legends started doing the exact same thing. A few short years later the major windsurfing brands widened the boards

Above Paddling the Murray River in Lane Poole Reserve.

Photo – Drone image by author

Below Stand-up paddleboarding at Black Diamond Lake.

Photo – Michael Lenane

(improving stability) and lengthened the paddles, and we have stand up paddle as we know it today.

Around 2008 windsurfing companies started creating and shipping stand-up paddleboards to Australia and the sport has been growing strong ever since.

BACKYARD BLISS

One thing that touring Australia has taught me is that no matter where you are in this beautiful country, you can always find amazing locations to immerse yourself in.



Types of SUPs:

There is a huge variety of stand-up paddleboards that can be broken up into four categories—surfing, racing, touring and all-round. The easiest boards to use are 'all-round' boards because they are usually the widest, making balance much easier and this is usually what beginners lean towards.

After the beginner stage some people move onto surfing, racing or touring boards based on the direction they want to progress in.



DO IT YOURSELF

Where is it? Lane Poole Reserve, 100 kilometres south of Perth, 7.5 kilometres south of Dwellingup.

Entry fees apply in Lane Poole Reserve. See exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au for details.

Recommended paddle locations in WA: Black Diamond Lake, Stockton Lake, Shelley Beach Park, Yardie Creek and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Best for beginners: Lakes and rivers

It is so wonderful to be a tourist in your own backyard and find new ways to experience nature. The best places to start paddling are lakes and rivers as they can be much safer than the ocean. From picnic spots, day trips, adventure outings to overnights and extended stays, you will find something you like.

My life is based around stand-up paddleboards, so I'll always promote bringing one along with you or hiring one on your travels. It can improve your fitness and core strength, get you closer to nature, create memorable family experiences and give you an excuse to catch up with friends or have some 'you' time.

If stand-up paddle is not for you, a kayak, or a tyre tube, or even a pool noodle will do the trick. Enjoying these beautiful spaces from the water is one of the most relaxing things you will ever do.

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Above Wula Gura Nyinda Eco Adventures in Shark Bay World Heritage Area.

Photo – Tourism WA

Right Paddling Big Brook Dam.

Photo – Cliff Winfield

“Absolutely captivated by the pure beauty of this natural environment, this experience is a true privilege.”



Michael Lenane is the company director of Sunset Stand-Up Paddleboards and an advocate for the benefits of spending time in nature to relieve stress and improve wellness. He stars in his YouTube channel *The SUP Show* providing tips relating to stand-up paddleboarding. He can be contacted at info@sunsetsup.com.au