

NOOSA LIFE

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NATURAL PERFORMER: Former Olympic diver Matthew Mitcham is appearing in *Under the Covers* during Noosa alive!
PHOTO: JOHN MCRAE

Show pony is 'at home' up on stage

Olympian a natural performer

■ Michele Sternberg

MATTHEW Mitcham loves being in the spotlight - whether that's on stage or on the 10m platform.

The former Olympic diver, who won gold at Beijing, says it wasn't that big a transition from sport to the stage.

"I think I've always had that show pony part of my personality, that's probably how I discovered diving because I was already doing trampolining and back in the olden days when you were allowed on the diving boards I would go down to the pool and do swan dives."

A diving coach spotted him and, as they say, the rest is history.

But now Mitcham, 29, has found a new love in cabaret and he says he's looking forward to coming to Noosa

to perform *Twists and Turns* and *Under the Covers* - his own life story laid out bare on stage.

The cabaret double bill is "logical" in that they are Part A and Part B to his life story thus far.

Twists and Turns is about his diving career and the challenges he faced, while *Under the Covers* is about his journey of coming out. And he says it is this honesty and his candid approach that resonates with his audience.

"That experience of transition is pretty universal, whether it's work, motherhood, divorce, death of a loved one ... people are always ill-prepared and, personally, I don't think I handled it as gracefully as I should have.

"I think people really appreciate hearing the real

story. People come up to me after the show and share their stories with me, about depression, anxiety, that they have never felt comfortable telling anyone about.

"I've shown my vulnerability and people feel safe enough to share and have that conversation."

He's also loved learning a new skillset, including singing and dancing.

Mitcham, who grew up in Brisbane but now lives in Sydney, says he's looking forward to coming to Noosa as both he and his partner have family here.

"We'll spend a few days either side of the festival to catch up with family."

➔ See Matthew Mitcham in *Twists and Turns* and *Under the Covers*, July 27

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