

Nomads in nature

We check in with **TRACY MORRIS** and her adventurous family, The Blonde Nomads, as they travel Australia in their caravan.



"Look Mum... I saw a sea star, a stripy fish and tiny baby shrimps!"

Our five-year-old, Marli, talks to us through her snorkel before dipping her head back in the water for another look. She is in her element as she has just learned to snorkel and can't get enough of exploring the amazing underwater world of a small rock pool in **Innes National Park**, South Australia.

We have been living in our caravan for over six months now and moments like these are plentiful as we travel around our amazing country, "Oz-tay-lior" as Ziggy, our two-year-old, calls it.

Our house may be small (22 feet to be exact), but it has all we need, and it has taken us to some amazing destinations where we have made many cherished memories.

One of our favourite things to do now is wake up each morning and look out of our 'bedroom' window to see what delights we can find. We have spotted an array of animals from kangaroos, wallabies and emus to dolphins and even whales out at sea.

We are amazed at how much our mini Blondies are learning as we travel. Whether we are visiting a sink hole, waterfall or historical site, they insist that we read the sign boards to them and explain why, what, when and where we are. Often, to our surprise, they relay it all back to us (usually at a random moment) a few weeks later. This hands-on 'road-schooling' is an amazing way for little minds to absorb the wonders around them.

The simple life

Many people we meet ask us what spurred this lifestyle change, and for us, it was the ever-increasing hustle and bustle of Sydney life, which we knew wasn't for us. So, we sold our house and most of our possessions and, so far, haven't looked back!

At times it is tough, as we miss our family and friends and do not have the support network that comes with having loved ones close by. Thanks to technology we have regular video calls back home which the kids love as well as sending post cards and letters in the mail, which is a great way to prepare Marli for school next year. Whether that will be via distance education, homeschooling or mainstream school we are undecided at this stage (watch this space).

Making connections

Slowing down with our little ones gives us the opportunity to meet and enjoy time with fellow travellers. There is a real sense of community within the Nomads of Australia and we have met some amazing people on

our adventures. The longer we are on the road the more we value these connections and realise that it's not all about seeing this scenic spot or climbing that mountain, but more about the incredible people you meet while you are doing it... and the unique experiences and opportunities that come from those friendships.

Camping vs glamping

We choose to stay in a combination of national parks, free camps and established caravan parks while we travel. We take advantage of the facilities offered in caravan parks like connecting to power to use our onboard washing machine and stocking up on groceries and supplies from town. We then love to escape back to nature to embrace and experience raw, untouched coastline, national parks or bush camps. Our caravan is fully set up to operate 'off-grid', as well as charge all of our devices and camera equipment. We also have an **OzTent** with us which allows us to leave the caravan when we want to explore more remote locations.

Funding our travels

We work as travel journalists and have partnered with some great adventure brands



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via sponsorship and content creation. We produce videos, photos and articles for their marketing channels as well as our own. It is an amazing opportunity to be able to work and travel and to be paid for it. The great outdoors is proving to be an awesome office, but it is a lot of hard work, especially while juggling the kids, as we don't have the luxury of babysitters. One of our main challenges is to make a conscious decision to stop, put the cameras down and just be in the moment with our family and let some moments be just for us.

Life skills

When spending so much time outside it is only a matter of time before you start to learn

a variety of useful skills to help you survive. Marli and Ziggy are learning all about fishing, which they love. We teach them to respect all animals above and below the water and to only take what you need. They also love helping to build and start a fire, as well as preparing and cooking food on it.

Our country is so amazing and diverse with magical rainforests, deserts, waterways, beaches and bush to explore. We can't wait to see more and share its wonders together.

There is something rejuvenating about exploring the great outdoors. Do you know the feeling? If not, I encourage you to venture outside, go somewhere different and see something new. Your mind, body and soul will thank you for it. ■

