

# An introduction from the President

NZMCA members; I'd like to introduce to your fellow members, the Sturrocks – a Kiwi family you're going to be hearing a lot about over the next year or so.

The NZMCA Board has agreed to partner with the Sturrocks to become champions of the sustainability cause – with the family becoming a 'real-life trial' visiting rallies and NZMCA events throughout the country to show fellow members how sustainability can work on the road.

This is a small part of a wider sustainability project that the Board and National Office are currently establishing the parameters for, before seeking member input.

In their role the Sturrocks will effectively become a sustainability road show – travelling throughout the country to share the 'big picture' message about the importance of sustainability to this organisation and demonstrating it in the most hands-on way possible.

While they are on the road, after the first quarter of next year, they will not only be demonstrating the sustainable aspects of their sustainably refurbished bus but also fulfilling their own passion to educate members

and spearhead tree-planting and other environmentally-appropriate projects.

Establishing this partnership with the Sturrocks offers the NZMCA a number of benefits, including providing a very visual, practical example of this Association's commitment to sustainability and enabling us to trial the practicality of new technologies and resources – i.e. the use of biodiesel.

It also gives us the opportunity to engage members in the sustainability conversation in a down-to-earth, hands-on manner.

I trust you will enjoy meeting them on the road or at a rally in the months ahead.

**Bruce Stanger**  
NZMCA President



## The year of living sustainably

Campbell and Nikki Sturrock (#60503) are NZMCA members who have been committed environmentalists for as long as they can remember. However, they are about to take their commitment to the next level as the Association's sustainability 'champions'.

**T**he couple recently sold their house in Auckland and are planning to spend at least a year travelling the country in a converted bus – a 1978 Mercedes-Benz 0305 – with their three school-age children – Bracken, Breeze and Reef.

This isn't your typical 'escape from the rat race' adventure though. The Sturrocks are currently upgrading their bus to make it as environmentally sustainable as possible.

Their trip around New Zealand is not only the adventure of a lifetime, it's also a real life experiment exploring the realities of living sustainably on the road.

The Sturrocks will visit NZMCA rallies and events throughout the country to not only share their experiences with fellow members but also roll up their sleeves and get involved in local sustainability projects they encounter on their journey.

This is the first of a regular series in *The*



Meet the Sturrocks - the family who are going to spend next year as a 'real life' sustainability trial for the NZMCA. From left: Campbell, Breeze (8), Reef (6), Nikki and Bracken (11).

*Motor Caravanner* documenting their journey, the people they meet, and what they learn about how the NZMCA, as an organisation, can increase its commitment to sustainability:

**It's kind of appropriate that Campbell and Nikki Sturrock met at a Forest and Bird Society meeting. Both of them grew up in the outdoors with a strong love for, and connection to nature. Fifteen years and three children later, the Sturrocks are more passionate than ever about the environment and are excited by the challenge of living sustainably on the road for the next 12 months.**

**THE MOTOR CARAVANNER:** How and when did you first get interested in environmental issues?

**NIKKI:** I've always had a love of nature right from when I was little girl living with my great-aunt who had a lovely garden. My interest in nature was always there but the activist in me was awoken when crude oil started washing up on the coast line when we lived opposite the Marsden Point refinery. We went on a school tour of the plant and I voiced my concerns very loudly to anyone who would listen. I was 11-years-old at the time and I've spent a lifetime trying to make my voice heard and doing what I can for the environment.

**CAMPBELL:** I grew up on a 10 acre block in West Auckland beside the Kaipara River. My Mum and

Dad were self-sufficient long before it was trendy. We grew our own vegetables, raised livestock and milked our own cow every day. I spent a lot of time in the outdoors and in the garden. It was a brilliant childhood and instilled a connection to nature that has remained. I had a real interest in all the birds on our farm. I would spend hours on the roof of the house identifying them with the help of a telescope and dozens of bird books.

**THE MOTOR CARAVANNER:** How did you meet?

**NIKKI:** I met Campbell at a Forest and Bird meeting and from the first moment I saw him I was lovestruck. I thought everyone in the room could hear my heart beating. He walked me to the car after the meeting and opened my door for me. That night under the clothesline I prayed to God to let me marry Campbell Sturrock from Forest and Bird. Cam asked me to marry him in front of the Taj Mahal in India after supporting me through the Out on a Limb project in 2002. God's onto it!

**CAMPBELL:** When we met, Nikki was the more radical activist type with a background of real results in her conservation work. I was more of a committee man and her energy and charisma was irresistible. It was a couple of years before we got together and our adventure began for real. In between I was her 'normal friend', a sounding

board for some of her interesting ideas and schemes. I was the voice of reason to make sure they weren't too far out there.

**THE MOTOR CARAVANNER:** Tell us about some of the projects you've been involved in?

**NIKKI:** I've organised tree plantings, beach clean ups, a 'Swap a noxious weed for a native tree' campaign with support from the Black Power, the Kiwis for Kiwi Northland-wide campaign where my team and I collected 7,500 submissions urging the government to create mainland Kiwi sanctuaries.

I raised half a million Indonesian dollars to save the rhinoceros and I've also fundraised to save beached whales and feed people living in trees who were trying to save the forests on the West Coast. I created and built the Great Drain Game, a mobile project that explains how inside drains go to treatment plants and outside drains flow to the sea. The game was designed to educate people about how important it is not to pour anything down outside drains and to date it's been seen by over 250,000 people.

I was instrumental in launching the New Zealand Kiwi Foundation and I've also been involved in pest trapping, native bush fencing and tree releasing.

**CAMPBELL:** I studied environmental science at



Home schooling is going to be part of the adventure for the Sturrocks' three children when the family hits the road next year in their refurbished bus.

university in the South Island and went on to work for the former Auckland Regional Council as a Pollution Control Officer. There was a great team there and it was real family feeling in those days. We loved doing our bit to clean up and protect Auckland's waterways.

After 11 years at Council it was time for a change and I worked for infrastructure company Fulton Hogan in an environment and sustainability advisory role for nine years. During my time there I convinced them to purchase the very first 100% electric company car, a Nissan Leaf. A bonus was I got to drive it!

I was also involved in getting biodiesel into the company fuel supply and installing a large solar power system. One of the things I enjoyed most about the role was getting to talk passionately with hundreds of staff about how our everyday choices around how we live our lives, spend our money and operate our businesses has significant impacts, positive and negative, on the planet and our fellow humans. Through these conversations I hope I instilled some capacity and desire for people to make more thoughtful choices that benefit people, the planet and add economic value in the long term.

Inspired by Nikki's conservation efforts I also initiated a tree planting restoration of the local foreshore reserve next to our house in Otahuhu. With the generous support of neighbours, scout groups, council and other community members

we planted some 4,500 plants over four years. I'm happy to say this initiative will continue even though we've since left the area.

**THE MOTOR CARAVANNER:** Where did the idea come from to sell your house, buy a bus and head off around the country for a year with your kids?

**NIKKI:** It really went from a dream to reality after taking the kids to India. We've got three kids. Bracken is 11 and is named after the plant which is the first plant to grow after a forest has been destroyed and is the nursery crop to bring a new forest to life. Breeze is eight and is named after a woodland creature who puts her life on the line to save her world. Reef is six and is named in honour of the reefs around the world that support so much life and biodiversity in our magnificent oceans. While we were in India we watched them grow as people and to be able to explore New Zealand with them, and learn more about sustainability while we did it, just made sense.

**CAMPBELL:** We nearly did it when Nikki was pregnant with Reef. After a massive effort from Nikki to get the house ready to sell, I got cold feet and chickened out. I owe her big time for that. Nikki never gave up on the idea and her attitude to life and immense talent and drive is part of what gave me the confidence to say 'let's do it' this time around.

This trip is a stepping stone to our ultimate dream of settling down on a piece of land to build our own bespoke eco house where Nikki can express her full array of creative talents. The bus design and fit out will be a great learning curve for all of us. With the kids being home schooled it's an opportunity to expand their learning environment and network of friends. Breeze aims to make a new friend every day.

**THE MOTOR CARAVANNER:** How has your commitment to sustainability impacted on your lives?

**NIKKI:** I'm relatively new to the sustainability conversation as it is not just an environmentally friendly idea but also includes people, planet and profit. So when making day-to-day decisions, these three things inform our choices. I'm particularly interested in all of the stuff we consume. Is cheap really cheap if you take into account the cost to the planet and the people we share the planet with? Do you stop to consider where the stuff you buy was made and what materials were used? What age was the child who made it? What conditions do they work in? Are they paid a living wage? Are some workers in some far off country dying so you can buy more stuff?

**CAMPBELL:** Obviously my career has been focused around trying to effect change in people and business in the sustainability space. I consider



Campbell and Nikki Sturrock talk over their plans for the refurbishment of the bus with Sam West, of Auckland Motor Homes Servicing & Repairs. As the picture shows, it's a big job and every aspect of it is being thought through using the People Planet Profit sustainable framework.

myself a conscious consumer. I try to consider people and the planet whenever I'm spending a dollar. My favourite way of expressing what sustainability means to me comes from well-known architect William McDonough who said, "How do we love all the children of all species for all time?" This is a way of thinking that that Nikki and I try to instil in our three amazing children.

**THE MOTOR CARAVANNER:** What will refurbishing the vehicle to a high level of sustainability involve?

**NIKKI:** Everything we touch in the bus has to have been thought through using the People Planet Profit sustainable framework. Thankfully we found Sam West our pro-sustainability refurbishing technician who is fully up for working this conversation through the entire build.

From materials, appliances, toileting, heating, power, flooring, water, fuel, electric vehicles; it's about looking at these things and considering where did this stuff come from, how far has it travelled, who made it, how were they treated, how long will it last, what's it made of, can it be repaired, can we renew, reuse or recycle it? Is it toxic? Is it supported by real people who are willing to stand by their product and service? How do we reduce waste?

Between the three of us we have had some pretty involved conversations which are pulling together a very strong sustainable place to stand. This we hope will create a model for others to pick from

and build on when making their choices.

**THE MOTOR CARAVANNER:** What do you hope to achieve from the trip?

**NIKKI:** From a personal point of view, I'm so grateful to have such an amazing family. We enjoy each other's company and we're all concerned for the health and wellbeing of the planet. My little boy Reef picks up litter everywhere we go – so you can imagine how long it took us to walk down the street in Delhi! In the end we just got him to make wee piles along the way.

I'm looking forward to introducing my children to New Zealanders who are actively making our country a beautiful place to live. Ultimately we want to leave it better than we found it and enjoy the journey along the way.

In terms of spreading the word about sustainability, we're very keen to listen and learn from others as we travel. There's a world of experienced people out there and we're in the privileged position to go and meet them and ask them what they think. We've come from an industrial past, we're aiming for an intelligent future and the way forward for us is to act in the present and encourage people to think about the importance of sustainability.

**CAMPBELL:** I'm hoping for a great family adventure and some wonderful memories. I'm looking forward to meeting interesting and inspiring people, to learning more about

ourselves and New Zealand and sharing our experiences along the way.

From a broader perspective it will be nice to be part of what will hopefully be a good news story. There are not many of those around these days.

I know there will be lots of challenges along the way. We're just getting stuck into upgrading our bus and we hope to hit the road in February or March, 2016 and we can't wait to see where the road takes us.

### Living life to the full

Some members might recognise Nikki Sturrock as a former presenter on the weekly TV series *Attitude*, which focused on the issues and interests of people either living with a disability or caring for a person with a disability.

Featuring news and issues of particular relevance to the disabled community, it was a positive, upbeat show that aimed to encourage a more inclusive society – an approach to life that Nikki lives every day after losing her left leg 20 years ago to a drunk driver.

"Until three years ago I was wearing an artificial limb full time but I am currently part of a clinical trial testing a new implant to better the lives of amputees," says Nikki.

"Medical devices and trials take time and I didn't want to put my family's life on hold so I will be on crutches from time to time throughout the journey." 🐣