

MANLY VALE



Life as The Blonde Nomads has taken the Morris family some beautiful places so far, and they expect more to come as they hit the road for at least the next year. Pictures: Supplied

Next home is the road

Family set to sell up and travel as social media fans watch on

Sarah Swain

DITCHING one's job to travel around Australia in a luxury campervan is something many people dream of - and a Manly Vale family is about to do it for real.

Not only that, they're getting the \$70,000, 2017 campervan for free for a year - thanks to their thousands of social media fans.

But, unlike most travellers, couple Tracy Morris, 34, and carpenter husband Rob, 37, who call themselves The Blonde Nomads, will have two children in tow, Marli, 4, and Ziggy, 2.

Mrs Morris said it was "a kind of a leap of faith".

"We have done a trip in a caravan before Ziggy came along and that was great, so we know what we're in for," she said.

"We know there's a teething period as we get used to being so close to each other."

The couple started posting pictures of family trips around Australia on social media photo site Instagram in 2012. Now they have 17,500 fans, another 3000 on Facebook as well as a website.

Travel firms, who love what the family is doing, started giving them free holidays in return for coverage and now the family plans to become full-time online "influencers".

They will typically get freebies in return for promoting places online.

"We've had so many great opportunities - we've worked with Jetstar, Airleak and done some amazing stuff," Mrs Morris said.

"We found they want to work with us but they don't necessarily want to pay to fly us to the destinations.

"I said, 'If we were travelling full-time we could pitch to them and contact the tourist boards and say, 'Do you have anything in the pipeline with marketing family-friendly content?'"

The family, who have sold

How to become an 'insta travel family'

- ▶ Start with short trips to test the water
- ▶ Budget and prioritise
- ▶ Pack lots of snacks for the children
- ▶ Remember it's about the journey not the destination
- ▶ Keep kids in a routine but don't fight over bedtime
- ▶ Expect the unexpected
- ▶ Boost social media following by creating quality content, telling a story and sharing something unusual
- ▶ Choose a niche
- ▶ Use relevant hashtags
- ▶ Comment and like on other people's feeds
- ▶ Never buy followers or likes
- ▶ Details: theblondenomads.com.au

most of their possessions and will put the rest in storage, will head to Tasmania first. Their family home in Innes Rd is going to auction on October 14 and is expected to fetch up to \$1.9 million.

They plan to be away for a year - but could stay longer.

The couple, who will take one tub of clothes each, are exploring home schooling for Marli, who will be held back from starting for a year.

"The life skills she'll learn along the way will be amazing," Mrs Morris said.

"We're going to outgrow the house and we just want to get away from the hustle and bustle of suburban life."

They will bank any money they make from their house after paying off the mortgage and Mrs Morris said they were not into luxuries anyway.

"We've never had Fordal and we buy the coffee pods for the machine, we don't buy take away coffees," she said. "We're so much happier when we strip it all back."



Manly Vale's Rob and Tracy Morris with kids Marli, 4, and Ziggy, 2. Picture: Julian Andrew