

# *OMG, what we have done*

Larissa Zimmerman  
Actress, Brisbane Australia

Ok I admit it. I fell for the midlife tree change fantasy.

At 30 I'd chopped the hair, bought the motorbike, left the man and my stable job to get 8 part time jobs at once, trying to work out what I wanted to do with my life.

After that first midlife assessment I fell into a great corporate role with the Federal Police and then went into my own business to wear more suits and heels. I've even been on stage with Richard Branson and Eddie McGuire in front of 8000 people. But the midlife assessment continued. Is this really what I wanted? Or did I want to live off the land, have birds singing, wallabies grazing and awesome outdoor campfires under a million stars.



In southwest Sydney I created a heart shaped vegetable garden at the front of my suburban home that the neighbours could harvest and I didn't have to buy veggies for a year. But the restlessness persisted. And so it happened that the purchase of 300 acres in NNSW occurred.

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So what's my fear? That the reality of rushing in fails to fuel the fantasy and the great tree change becomes the worst decision we've made. Will it drive us crazy and apart or prove our love for each other and the bush?

Now growing up on a farm and spending years in the Army meant the bush is no enemy. In fact I love it. And I loved planning this new project with the new man in my life – a city boy who is very different to me, yet similar enough that I thought we would be in bliss in our bush haven.

Outdoor showers, naked meditation with the nearest neighbours a kilometre away and yes, an abundance of wildlife. What more could one want?

Well one might want a permanent powerful power source. I've now learned that a 1000 watt generator won't power an iron, nor allow the washing machine to operate with the lighting at night.

No matter, the washing gets done through the day and there was just enough power left to add a hand held blender. I had my first banana smoothie in 11 months yesterday – what a treat!



And the ironing gets done at the caravan park where I have a high pressure, hot water shower once a week, without having to light the gas and heat the water for half an hour, nor worry about the tank water running out.

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This is before I go to my Toastmasters meeting. It's an hour and a half drive from home and worth every minute for my sanity. The term cabin fever is real I tell you, especially when you don't have mobile reception or internet.

I think I'd like to see less snakes this season too. Since we woke at 4am with a brown snake 2 meters from us in our cabin 11 months ago, we've slept in a tent. When the going gets really tough we call it Serenity Haven in the Trees (SH\*T).

Honestly though, it is a beautiful block. The morning cuppa and evening mocha are just divine, in a tranquil setting. We've traded the hole in the ground for a compost loo and have a great mountain view. The wallabies are becoming more tame and our first 12 months are almost up, with cabin plans well underway. Indeed the tree change has been a challenge. I just hope that my fears are not realised and in years to come, we can look back and laugh at those early days that tested and strengthened our love.

