



## Green power: The self-made magnate and a wildlife warrior

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Wealthy Gold Coast businessman Kenton Campbell is the first to admit he has a lot to learn about the environment but he is already an expert in giving money away to help the cause.

Mr Campbell, of Runaway Bay, says he doesn't like the term "millionaire" but considers he and his family are "comfortably self-sufficient".

He owns 41 Zarraffa's Coffee outlets in the Greater Brisbane area but only spends half his time building up the business.

The other half he spends researching conservation issues and figuring out ways to help environmental experts make a difference.

He knows his outlets' takeaway paper cups are not exactly environmentally-friendly and is working on ways to encourage people to recycle them.

"I realised making lots of money didn't make me happy so I starting considering ways I could give back to society. But I wanted to do something more than simply write cheques for people," he said.

He met and was impressed by the late Steve 'Crocodile Hunter' Irwin who was killed in 2006 after being fatally pierced in the chest by a stingray barb while filming at the Great Barrier Reef. Steve's father, Bob is now a mentor.



"When I first met Bob (Irwin) I thought Australia had a fairly good track record on native animals but he told me different," he said.

Mr Irwin informed him Australia had the worst record for extinct and endangered species of any developed nation in the world.

Last week Mr Irwin called him in a panic about some wombats in South Australia that had been buried alive by farmers bull-dozing their land.

"Bob needed to get their in a hurry to try to save them so we organised for him to fly there," he said.

"The business is a conduit to conservation; some things I can make happen quickly but others will take years."

Mr Campbell, whose life will feature on the ABC's *Australian Story* tomorrow night, moved to Australia from the United States "with very little money" when he was 25.

He's spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and much time and effort helping protect endangered and threatened species.

Mr Campbell has sponsored a three-year koala research project at Ironbark Station at Blackbutt in Queensland's South Burnett region and supports a breeding program for endangered turtles on the Mary River, south of Gympie.

Currently, he and his company's software experts are spending about \$80,000 to develop a koala collar for scientists to track them in an attempt to control rising mortality rates.

"It's just a drop in the ocean really and much more will have to be done by everyone at a local and government level if we're going to save our creatures," he said.

His wife, Rachel, supports his endeavours and his eldest son, Vaughn aged 10 told him he thought what he was doing "was great".

"That was a very big moment for me," he said. The couple have two other boys Zachary, 7 and Aareton, 5."

**Australian Story airs at 8pm tomorrow night on ABC1.**