

Kjell's raving about life in New Zealand

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By Cherie Taylor

All Kjell Gudmundsen misses about his homeland of Norway are goat's cheese and sausages.

Other than that Kjell has fallen in love with New Zealand since moving here 21 years ago with his Kiwi wife, Rebecca.

Kjell is the Neighbours in our Community guest speaker on Friday September 30 at the Rotorua Arts Village Experience in Hinemaru St at lunchtime.

He's a bit of a character too, and sure to delight and encourage immigrants to Rotorua.

And one thing is for sure — he's a true blue Kiwi.

"I just love New Zealand. It's my home now," he says.

It's not long before he will tell you what he misses most



AT HOME: Norway's Kjell Gudmundsen loves living in New Zealand.

PICTURE: STEPHEN PARKER

about his homeland.

"It has to be the goat's cheese — it's brown," he says.

"They can't make sausages in New Zealand."

But he's not tempted to return to Norway for a taste

because friends always bring him some when they visit.

Kjell and Rebecca moved to Rotorua eight years ago after selling their house in Auckland to move to Nelson.

"It's a long story but we stopped in Rotorua after selling our house and just fell in love with the place, so we decided to stay," he says.

However, like all immigrants, Kjell says he made the mistake of comparing his Norwegian lifestyle with the Kiwi lifestyle.

In Norway, employed as an engineer, Kjell received wages of between \$150,000 and \$200,000? annually.

Unable to find the same work here, he got work as a bus driver earning around \$30,000 a year.

"I started to compare what I had in Norway and of course

I expected it to be the same as in Norway. That was a big mistake. I quickly realised I am in New Zealand," he says.

"That is one of the biggest issues with immigrants. They compare the cost of living and wages with what they had. Many immigrants find they won't get the same opportunities as they left behind. It just doesn't happen. There is a big difference."

New Zealand is the place to live, Kjell says.

"I wouldn't swap it for anywhere else in the world. The lifestyle is awesome," he says. "It's a beautiful, magnificent country. From Cape Reinga to Bluff there is everything in between."

If you would like to hear Kjell speak about his journey and settling here, he will be at RAVE next Friday from 12pm-1pm.