

## Nici Andronicus

### *Former elite triathlete, champion of the organic food industry*

Nici Andronicus represented Australia in triathlon and modern pentathlon for more than ten years in the 1990s. She competed at ten World Championships and more than ninety international events, becoming world no. 2 in 1997 and a three-time national triathlon champion.

As an ultra-fit athlete, Nici gained considerable insight into the nutritional benefits of a good diet – and a healthy lifestyle – in building resistance and providing stamina. This insight was one reason Nici set up Organicus, a commercial food service company that produces a range of certified organic food for hotels, restaurants and cafes, after she retired from professional sport.



The major impetus, however, was when her husband Paul McLean was diagnosed with cancer of the tear duct in 2006, an extremely rare and normally lethal disease and a particularly hard one to manage.

Told that the treatment options were limited and that permanent brain damage may result, Paul underwent radical surgery at Harvard Medical School in the United States, followed by massive amounts of chemotherapy and radiation. Now fully recovered, Paul believes his obsessive attitude towards organic food and regular exercise helped him to cope with the chemotherapy and save his life.

As a mother of five, Nici Andronicus believes she must do everything in her power to prevent her children from suffering cancer – by providing them with fresh organic food, teaching them how to live healthily and how to be happy

This, together with Paul's survival, convinced Nici to start Organicus. Starting out in a commercial kitchen in Brookvale, on the Northern Beaches of Sydney, in 2007, with Nici doing everything herself, Organicus is now sold in every state of Australia. The business turns over more than a million dollars a year worth of product such as cereal, soups, jams and compotes, with continued strong growth expected.

During her sporting career, Nici was always committed to junior sports development and the promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle. She was a spokesperson for various charities and

community initiatives, including SOCOG as an official Ambassador of the Sydney Olympic Games.

Nici seems to be following a family tradition as pioneers in the food industry; her grandfather was co-founder of Andronicus Coffee.

Organicus Kitchen & Pantry, a bright and breezy spin-off café, has proved an instant hit with the locals with a menu boasting entirely certified organic produce.

Today, Nici shares her inspiring story - the highlights, the challenges, the hard slog and the successes - and her passion for organic food and its role in helping us to lead a health life

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