

2 MINUTES WITH Gary Beecroft



Gary Beecroft was presented with a Tawa Community Civic Award in June 2018 for his many roles in the Tawa community. This was the wording on his citation at the time:

“Gary is on the board of the Tawa Rugby Club and for many years has been the ‘go-to man’, often seen on match day, ensuring the pitches are properly marked up and that everything runs smoothly. He recently became President of Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves, and played a part in last year’s [2017] purchase by Wellington City Council of The Forest of Tane which shares access to his home. He is also chair of the relatively new Tawa MenzShed group and has been instrumental in securing new premises for the group in Oxford St’s Rural Fire Depot, thus seeing a MenzShed established in Tawa.”

Where were you born?

I was born and bred in Otago. We lived first in Purakaunui, a small dairy and fishing village on the Otago Coast between Port Chalmers and Waitati, then Dunedin (where I met my wife to be), and Central Otago.

Where did you grow up?

Most of my childhood was spent living in Purakaunui and Dunedin North. We came from a rural background and, as children, life out of school was mostly outdoors – farming, fishing, shooting and walking the hills.

Where were you educated?

I went to school in Dunedin, North East Valley primary, and Otago Boys High School. My time at OBHS set me up for my life ahead and was very rewarding. Over the span of my working life I continued my education. So I started at Dunedin Teachers College, then Otago University, BA in Education, and a B Sc in Geology & Geography, a post grad in Natural Resources Management at Lincoln; some years later a Soils Diploma at the Egyptian International Centre for Agriculture, Cairo, Egypt, and finally an Executive Management Program at the University of Virginia, USA.

How long have you lived in Tawa?

Our family moved to live beside the Forest of Tawa 20 years ago. A great decision which has just got better each year.

What about family? Megan is a Policy Manager at the Ministry of Social Development. My children have spent all their lives in Tawa. Now Sandie (18) is beginning a design course at Massey, and Campbell (20) is doing Chemistry and Psychology at Victoria.

Work experience over the years

Following university I was a soils conservator with the Otago Regional Council, then Soil Scientist with the DSIR working irrigation and drainage, Dean of Science and Technology at Eastern Institute of Technology Hawkes Bay, CEO of the Agriculture ITO, Dairy Group General Manager, Lark International China, CEO of the Retail Meat ITO, and CEO of Retail Meat New Zealand.

Work experience over the years

As a young man I loved the outdoors, farming, fishing, shooting, canoeing, tramping, and mountaineering. In Tawa, now a bit older and slower, and with teenage children, I have become very involved in the Tawa Rugby Club, the Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves, and the MenzShed. I also do a little house renovating.



This photo appeared in last month’s newsletter: MenzShed chairman Gary Beecroft receiving an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) from Denise Garcia, President of Tawa Rotary.

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Favourite sports team(s)?

Hurricanes and Highlanders, I'm not sure in which order. The All Blacks, and really all New Zealand's national teams and individual international NZ sports competitors.

Favourite musical group and or individual singer?

Paloma Faith, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, David Bowie, and Freddie Mercury. Mostly a boy of the 70s and 80s.

Favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?

Rangataua (and for many of you) a small town between Wairau and Ohakune, beside the National Park; in a house build in 1890.

What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you the most satisfaction/pride?

As CEO of the Agriculture ITO where I could work with the farming industry to develop a very successful workplace-based, on job, farm education and training system for all the agriculture sector.

What are three things you would like to do before you die?

- See a fully functioning, proactive MenzShed in Tawa;
- See the creation of a 100-year conservation legacy protecting the flora and fauna of the Forest of Tawa and the lands of the Wellington Northern Outer Green Belt;
- See the Tawa Rugby Club win the Swindale Shield and the Jubilee Cup four more times.

(Compiled February 2019)