

## 2 MINUTES WITH ..... Jo Murray



*Where were you born?* Wellington

*Where did you grow up?* Tawa, Wellington

*Where were you educated?*

Tawa Primary, Tawa Intermediate, Tawa College, Victoria University, Massey University.

*How long have you lived in Tawa?*

I've lived in Tawa all except 11 years of my life. I moved into Wellington City a year into my Victoria University days, and lived there until Robbie and I bought our first house in Johnsonville in 1992. We then bought in Tawa about a year before Jess was born in 1998, and haven't ever left.

*What do you like about Tawa?*

It's a quiet area, close to town and close to Porirua, also close to the motorway. There's a great community here. It has good facilities like the community centre, railway stations and shops close by.

The community from young through to old – it's a real mix. There are great schools from pre schools through to intermediate and college. We've also been involved in lots of sports clubs and activities that kids can get involved with here. I love the fact we have the best of both worlds being so close to both Wellington and Porirua. I also love all the off-road walkways on our back door step in Tawa, Porirua and Wellington.

*What about family?*

Robbie Kerr – husband; Jess (22) and Melie (20)

Jess started her first year teaching this year at Tawa Intermediate and is loving it. She is also a contracted NZ cricketer playing for the White Ferns.

Melie is playing cricket professionally for the White Ferns and the Brisbane Heat in the Women's Big Bash League, and is studying part-time at Massey University.

The final addition to our family was last year when the girls finally talked us into getting our dog Willow. I'm still not quite sure how we ended up saying yes but luckily we haven't regretted it.

*Work experience over the years .....*

I've worked in sport most of my working life. I started at the Hillary Commission (now known as Sport NZ), then spent 6 years working with Murray Mexted setting up the International Rugby Academy (IRANZ). From there Robbie and I set up Kelly Sports NZ and Kelly Club which included running modified sports programmes so kids could try a range of sports after school and during school holidays. After selling that business I worked for Athletics Wellington and Wellington Hockey. I now work as a personal development manager at the NZ Cricket Players Association working primarily with the Wellington Firebirds and Central Stags men's teams.

*What are your interests and hobbies?*

I love all sports – it's always been a passion of mine as long as I can remember. My main sports were cricket and netball but I've enjoyed getting involved in other sports while Jess and Melie were growing up including football and athletics. I spent about 10 years volunteering in athletics helping run the Olympic Junior Athletics Club that's based in Tawa. I loved being able to give back and get involved in our local community through sport. We've all made lifelong friends along the way.

I love getting out for walks and runs every day, exploring the many off road tracks we have around Tawa, Porirua and Wellington. A weekend isn't complete without having a good catch up with friends at cafes around the region too. Local Authority in Porirua is a favourite on the weekend – owned by Cam Dunlop who grew up in Tawa (right next to City Fitness).

With Jess and Melie playing cricket around NZ and overseas it's given us a good excuse to do a bit of travel as well which I love. I always take my walking/running shoes to explore the places we go.

*Favourite sports team?*

I probably have to say the Wellington Blaze and the White Ferns, don't I! Tawa has been very well represented in both these teams, with Sophie Devine leading the way. Tawa Intermediate and Tawa College have always been hugely supportive of girls' cricket which has shown in the number who have gone on to higher honours.

*Favourite musical group and/or individual singer?*

There are so many New Zealand bands – great to be able to support local these days! Six60, L.A.B., Drax Project, Benee. And for extremely local, I have to mention a couple of the barbershop groups my sister Charlotte works with – MIB and Vocal Effects. They've both achieved on the world stage for a number of years now and I know how hard they work to achieve at the level they have.

*What is your favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?*

For many years January was spent heading to Colgate Games (athletics events), followed by Hawke's Bay cricket camps with other families and their kids. Because of this Hawke's Bay holds special memories of long hot summers, and time spent with extended family, and our friends who are pretty much like family to this day. When I was growing up we usually camped at Hahei in the Coromandel so that's definitely somewhere we've talked about returning to one day too. And I did a number of cycling holidays around NZ in my younger days which gives you a real appreciation into just how beautiful our country is.

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

Hard question, but in looking back I am pretty proud that there were a group of us who started the Olympic Junior Athletics Club in Tawa which grew to become the largest junior athletics club in the Wellington region with over 300 members. It showed me what can be achieved with a group of passionate volunteers. And that even though it was hard work at times, it was worth it for the experiences the kids and the adults got out of it.

I'm also proud of our two girls Jess and Melie. Jess for her resilience with her health and injury setbacks, including how she approaches life with the Type 1 diabetes and the remnants of Bells Palsy. It hasn't ever stopped her achieving her goals, including representing NZ in cricket and getting her Masters in Teaching and Learning. With Melie she set a goal at 9 years old to make the White Ferns and because of that she's had amazing opportunities to play for teams overseas and travel the world. What we love though is that she is much more than just a cricketer. With incredible support from Tawa College she achieved highly academically even though her in her final two years she had to do a lot of her work remotely. She also made lifelong friends there who, along with family, are very important to her.

*What are two or three interesting things about you that local people may not know?*

I am the only person in my entire family who is not a teacher. My two sisters (Charlotte and Susie), my brother Duncan, their other halves are all teachers. My parents Bruce and Shona were too. And our eldest daughter Jess is a teacher now too. They all absolutely love what they do.

Some will and some won't know that when I was in my early 30s I got breast cancer when Jess and Melie were little. I was one of the lucky ones who found it early and with an operation, chemo and radiation I'm still here today. The main reason I am mentioning this is to encourage anyone reading this to do your yearly checkups that doctors and the medical profession advise, and if you notice anything out of the ordinary, don't delay. The sooner you get onto things, the better the outcome.

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

I've never really been a huge goal setter, so this isn't something I think about much. Because of what I went through in my 30s I'm just thankful to be here, and it's made me make the most of every day.

*(Compiled November 2020)*