

New Zealand Country Music Festival Trust

2020 New Zealand Country Music Festival 23 May 2020 to 31 May 2020

For many years at Queen's Birthday weekend in Gore there has been a festive feeling as country musicians and followers have come together to celebrate country music.

Now key events organisations – the Gore Country Music Club, NZ Songwriters Trust, NZ Gold Guitar Committee and the Gore District Council - have come together to form a New Zealand Country Music Festival Trust.

Gore District has long been known as New Zealand's Capital of Country Music. Each year in June organisations collaborate to profile the Gore region and celebrate country music with hundreds of visitors from around New Zealand and overseas converging on Gore.

In future years, the Festival Trust will work with event organisers who have created something special to include in the events calendar for the week. The aim is to increase the profile of Gore and country music as well as New Zealand's outstanding country music artists.

"Forming the New Zealand Country Music Festival Trust is an exciting step in building on what is already happening over the week of Queen's Birthday. Since 1976 Gore has been known as the Capital of Country Music, over 100,000 hours of volunteer time each year goes into running the activities and the latest economic survey completed by Gore District attributes approximately \$1 million return to the district. This is a significant event that Gore residents can be proud of" says Trust Chairperson Jeff Rea.

Gore has a strong standing in the country music community both within New Zealand and overseas. The New Zealand Country Music Festival Trust will be working hard with its partners within the music industry, sponsors, local funders, sister city Tamworth and many more.

In 2020 the New Zealand Country Music Festival celebration will run for eight days starting on Saturday, 23 May 2020 and the week finishing with the final of the MLT NZ Gold Guitar Awards on the Sunday night. Throughout the week there will be a wide range of events for both local Southlanders and visitors to the region to enjoy.

If you have an idea or an event that you would like to see incorporated into New Zealand Country Music Festival, please get in touch with one of the trustees.

The Trustees of the New Zealand Country Music Festival Trust are Jeff Rea (Chairman), Julie Mitchell, Phil Geary, Barbara MacKay, Bronwyn Reid and Mayor Tracy Hicks.

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The Trustees

Jeff Rea

Jeff Rea has been involved in music all his life as a singer/songwriter and recording artist, with multiple television appearances and three albums to his credit. He spent ten years touring as a professional musician in the USA and returns annually to perform. He has vast experience in sound engineering, event production and producing albums for other artists. He has also had considerable experience in governance roles and is currently Chairperson of the New Zealand Songwriter's Trust. Jeff resides in West Otago where he runs a family farming operation with his wife and sons.

Mayor Tracy Hicks

Tracy Hicks is the current Mayor of the Gore District Council a role he has held since 2005. He has had a long involvement in local government being an elected member since in 1980 serving on the Mataura Borough Council, Gore District Council and the Southland Regional Council. Tracy is a national board member of Local Government New Zealand, the past chair of the Southland Mayoral Forum and a current member of the Southern District Health Board. He has been a trustee of the Community Trust of Southland of which he held the chair role for six years. Tracy has a strong interest in building the capacity and capability of Gore Community.

Philip Geary

Philip Geary has convened the MLT NZ Gold Guitar Awards Committee for 22 years and been a committee member for 25 years. Prior to this Philip and his wife Jackie were keen spectators at the NZ Gold Guitar Awards and then became members of the Gore Country Music Club. Philip completed a five-year apprenticeship in Invercargill as a fitter/turner. This led to a career as an engineer having 14 years on merchant ships worldwide achieving a ranking of Chief Engineer. After marrying wife Jackie, Jackie joined Philip at sea for three years. Philip was born in Winton and the oldest of seven siblings. He returned to Winton after his career at sea, then shifting to Mataura and working as an engineer at the Mataura Freezing Works. Phillip will be retiring in January 2020 from the Mataura Freezing Works and will continue his involvement with Country Music.

Bronwyn Reid

Bronwyn Reid is a Gore District councillor, with an interest in the arts and serving the community. A charter member of Gore River Valley Lions for 27 years, a past committee member of The Sound Foundry for 3 years, and for the last 8 years a member of Creative Communities NZ. Bronwyn is keen to see Gore grow its music base, to attract and welcome as many visitors as possible to the District.

Julie Mitchell

Julie Mitchell is the president of the Gore Country Music Club and a trustee of the New Zealand Songwriter's Trust. Julie's early career was with the banking industry and she has 22 years in the real estate industry. Julie was educated at St Peters College and her and husband Ron have three daughters. Julie has a passion for Gore and Country Music and is keen to see the district thrive economically and New Zealand Country Music Festival contributing to that success.

Barbara MacKay

Barbara MacKay trained as a primary school teacher and after teaching for several years she worked as life education trust educator for Southland. Barbara takes a keen interest in family and is the immediate past president of the New Zealand Songwriter's Trust, past president of Gore Sister City Committee, charter president of the Mataura Lioness Club, charter vice president of the Gore River Valley Lions Club, past trustee of Community South, and was a trustee of the Mataura Licensing Trust for 21 years. Barbara is an executive member of the Gore Women's Club. She has a passion for the continuing success for the writing and performing of country music.