

stuff

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A campaign in pictures: How NZ ended up buying Awaroa beach in Abel Tasman National Park

Glenn McConnell
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JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON / FAIRFAX NZ

How did NZ buy a beach? These two men successfully campaigned to buy an Abel Tasman inlet.

We bought a beach, New Zealand! **Forty thousand people and the Government**, (which means we can all take credit) **paid almost \$3 million for an inlet in the Abel Tasman National Park**. And on Sunday it's officially ours.

As 2015 was coming to an end, Bayleys' real estate agent, Glenn Dick was given a unique job. He had to sell a beach. He listed the Awaroa Inlet on Trademe, labelling the beach as "the best on the planet."

When Duane Major saw the listing he thought, "why should just one person have this? Why should I create a win for me and a loss for everybody else?"

ALDEN WILLIAMS/FAIRFAX NZ

Why should we buy a beach? Campaign organiser Duane Major explains.

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So Major and his friend, Adam Gardner, started a campaign to buy the beach. They didn't want the beach sold to private buyers. They sought to create a "win win," where everyone could access the beach.

The campaign needed at least \$2 million to be successful. The duo set up a Givealittle page, asking for people to crowd fund the purchase.

DEAN KOZANIC/STUFF

"I'm certainly no angel." Who were the people behind the campaign to buy the beach?

By February, their efforts had already raised over \$1.5 million. But it wasn't quite enough.

Stuff joined the campaign to buy Awaroa Inlet for New Zealand. The site donated \$20,000 towards the campaign. *Stuff's* Editor, Patrick Crewdson, urged readers to donate. If every reader gave \$1, the beach would have been ours, easy. "We're on the verge of accomplishing something special," he said.

Then Gareth Morgan got involved.

STUFF

Stuff campaigned to #BuyThisBeachNZ

Even with huge media attention, the philanthropist said it was unlikely that New Zealand would be able to buy the beach.

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According to Morgan, New Zealand had no chance of buying a beach for \$2 million. He was right.

Originally, the givealittle campaign called for \$2 million to buy the beach. Morgan said the cost was nearer to \$3 million - which was correct.

Gareth Morgan said the beach would likely cost \$3 million rather than the \$2 million advertised.

He offered to help fund the beach, in return for some private benefit. His offer was not received warmly.

Campaigners didn't care.

They kept working to fundraise for the beach.

Gareth Morgan made a graphic to explain what he wanted - only some of the beach.

In the end, almost 40,000 donors pledged more than \$2 million to help buy the beach. The question was: would that be enough?

One anonymous donor helped seal the deal.

The donor, later revealed to be the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust, gave \$250,000 towards the purchase.

KEVIN STENT/ FAIRFAX NZ

SUPPLIED

The "Our News!" team talk a little about "the warm fuzzies" and how to increase yours #buythisbeach

Late on a Tuesday night, as the campaign was coming to its end, the Government stepped in. At 10:58pm, on the 25th of February, the deal was confirmed.

The Government had agreed to donate \$350,000 towards the campaign.

Both the Government's contribution and the trust's donation came with "no strings attached", campaigner, Duane Major said.

And in the end, more than \$2m from everyday Kiwis (with a little help from the Government and the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust) was enough to buy the beach for everyone.

The celebrations didn't stop.

In March, the sale was officially confirmed.

A trust, set up to purchase the beach, took control, until the land was handed over to the Government in May.

DAVID WALKER/ Stuff.co.nz

SUF



An impromptu gathering at the newly-purchased Awaroa Beach in the Abel Tasman has taken place.

The Department of Conservation were given ownership of the beach, as part of the wider Abel Tasman National Park.

Of course, the beach would remain open to anyone wanting to visit, and many people have.

Camp ground owners, water taxi operators and air transport companies have reported huge interest in the area, following the campaign. The secluded spot has become a popular destination with many looking to find out what exactly they spent their money on during a Summer campaign to buy a beach.

Supporters of the public's purchase of Awaroa Inlet property hold party at Sumner Beach.

JOHN KIRK-ANDERSON/Stuff.co.nz



The next step is for the Department of Conservation to decide how this beach fits into its national park management plan.

« Previous 1 of 10 Next »

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