

# NZ GARDENS TRUST

## ASSESSORS 2022



### **JAN WOODHOUSE - Lead assessor**

#### **Landscape architect (Registered Fellow and Life Member NZILA)**

Diploma in Horticulture - Lincoln College

Certificate in Landscape Design - Lincoln College

Winner of David Combridge prize for top student of her year.

Jan worked for four years in the horticulture sector pre- and post her study including gaining experience in ornamental horticulture. She was initially employed as a landscape architect by the Ministry of Works in Christchurch specialising in small scale design. She also worked on the Te Anau Lake control project and on the Rolleston new town projects as Assistant Landscape Architect, before spending eight years working at as a tutor in the landscape department at Lincoln College where she honed her skills in design and student assessment.

She served two 4-year terms on the NZILA executive, was Vice president for a term, ran the NZILA awards through the 1990s and then served as a juror on the awards before joining a subcommittee tasked with reviewing the terms of the awards. She also served as a judge at the Eilerslie Flower show. She helped develop the judging criteria, judging the display and courtyard gardens and convened the student awards. In the final year the show was in Auckland she was the convenor of judges and the year after that she and Karen Lowther wrangled an invite to be shadow judge at Chelsea.

She is a fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architect, a trustee for Eden Gardens and a trustee for the Landscape Foundation. She is a practising landscape architect specialising in rural development and the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

She has been a member of the NZ Gardens Trust assessment panel since 2005 and for the last 11 years has acted as its convenor organising the assessment panel each year. During this time, she upgraded the criteria assessment sheet used and has she has also been responsible for adjustments made to the marking schedule. She has also written protocols for the Trust around the assessment process and the responsibilities of the assessors and the Trust.

### **ROBERT WATSON – landscape architect (Registered Fellow NZILA)**

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture - Lincoln University

Robert Watson originally trained as a lawyer but fell in love with working with land and landscape design while overseas, working for a London-based garden designer and contractor. On his return to

New Zealand, he completed a post-graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture at Lincoln University and set up his landscape architecture practice in Christchurch. The practice specialises in a wide range of landscape design and planning projects for urban and rural clients, institutions, local government and other organisations.

Robert prepared the layout design for Broadfields Garden, which subsequently became a NZ Garden Trust Garden of International Significance and for Annandale a historic house and garden with international recognition on Banks Peninsula.

He has won awards for his designs including a Gold at the 2009 Ellerslie Flower Show for a garden he designed for the Canterbury Horticultural Society, and Broadfields was a finalist for in the 2015 NZ Institute of Landscape Architects Awards.

Rob brings a wealth of design and management experience to the Trust assessment team. He chairs our ratification sessions.

### **RENEE DAVIES - landscape architect & ecologist (Registered Fellow NZILA)**

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Hons) - Lincoln University

Bachelor of Science (botany & zoology double major) – Victoria University

Renée Davies grew up exploring the gardens and environments of Taranaki. These early experiences of the landscapes shaped her career, which has maintained a focus on plants, ecology and landscapes. Having studied botany and zoology at Victoria University (one of the lucky ones to have been taught by the NZ botanical and natural history gurus Dr John Dawson and Dr George Gibbs), she then moved into landscape architecture as a way to blend her love of plants and scientific right brain with her creative left.

As an award-winning landscape architect she has worked in local government, private practice and education. Having recently returned home to Taranaki she is now working as the Planning and Design Lead for the New Plymouth District Council.

Renée has a passion for research and work relating to the blending of landscape architecture and ecology, with particular focus on living roofs, urban ecology, parks planning and design and rural land-use.

She is a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) has been past president of the NZILA and IFLA Delegate representing the NZILA on the world stage. She has travelled extensively and a main focus of her travels has always included visiting public and private gardens, parks and landscapes. These travels have been invaluable in informing her work as a NZ Gardens Trust Assessor.

Having extensive experience as a design judge for national and international design awards including the Hampton Court Flower Show, Ellerslie Flower Show, Landscaping NZ, Year of the Built

Environment, IFLA APR and Resene NZILA Pride of Place awards, she is also the artist behind the lovely illustration maps of gardens throughout the country in NZ Gardener magazine.

Having returned home to Taranaki she is in the slow but rewarding process of establishing her own garden under the shadow of the Mouna. Renée says her own gardening endeavours add to the great admiration and appreciation she has of the quality and effort evident in the many gardens she visits as an assessor.

Renée's passion for everything botanical, garden design and her academic experience has brought rigour and discipline to the assessment process.

## **PAUL ROPER-GEE - landscape architect NZILA**

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Hons) - Lincoln University

Paul Roper-Gee is a Landscape Architect and Garden Designer with Botanic Landscape Architects in Christchurch. He has been practising since 1999. Over the last twenty years Paul has worked in a number of design firms in Christchurch and in Cambridge, England. While living in the UK, Paul worked as a gardener at the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens. Today his work covers boutique residential garden design through to commercial and public realm redevelopment and multidisciplinary urban design projects.

Paul's exhibition garden at the 2012 Ellerslie International Flower Show won Gold and 'Best in Show'. Recent award-winning work includes Port Vila waterfront in Vanuatu (Winner – Community Design, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Awards, 2019) and Te Raekura Redcliffs School (Winner - Education and Play, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects Awards, 2022). Paul has recently been a Jury panel member for the NZILA Awards and judge for the New Zealand Flower & Garden Show.

## **DYLAN NORFIELD Collections Supervisor, Dunedin Botanic Gardens**

Bachelor of Applied Science (ecology) (hons) - University of Wolverhampton

Born in Tavistock, Devon, Dylan moved around the south of the UK spending a large proportion of his childhood in South Wales. Up until the age of twelve, he was interested in computers, then made the switch to plants. In 1986 his parents Andrew and Rosemary started a small mail order nursery selling rare and unusual trees grown from seed. His grandmother on his father's side was also a very keen gardener and he spent a lot of time helping out in her garden. The nursery was eventually moved to a larger property in the Wye Valley.

After University Dylan took up a job at Bristol Botanic Garden which has a collection of over 4,000 plant species. In 1996 Norfield's Nursery began exhibiting at horticultural shows around the UK. Dylan joined the nursery to help run the show side of the business and moved the nursery to its new premises in Llangwm, South Wales where he set up a 40-acre arboretum as a seed orchard.

From 2000-2005 he set up displays for Norfield's Nursery, achieving over 30 Royal Horticultural Society Gold medals and five Chelsea Gold medals for displays of rare trees and shrubs. After a

holiday to New Zealand in 2006 the decision was taken to sell the nursery and he decided to move to Dunedin in the South Island of New Zealand. (His parents followed in 2007 and live in Motueka.)

His initial employment in NZ was in a wholesale nursery near Dunedin, where he gained knowledge of the horticultural industry in New Zealand. In 2007 he was employed by Dunedin Botanic Garden for a year looking after the Rose and Herbaceous Collection. After six months he moved to the Geographic and Arboretum curating over 2000 species of plants from nine geographic areas. In 2019 he took over as acting Collections Supervisor, managing the horticultural staff, operations and collections at Dunedin Botanic Garden.

While he has been at the Botanic Garden other opportunities have arisen such as editor and committee member for the New Zealand Branch of the International Dendrology Society, assessor for the Dunedin open garden scheme; garden assessor and past trustee for the RNZIH New Zealand Garden Trust; a lead judge at the Ellerslie International Flower Show and New Zealand Garden and Flower Show; writer for New Zealand Gardener and a member of the curatorial advisory committee for Eastwoodhill, New Zealand's National Arboretum.

## **PAULINE MURPHY**

Bachelor of Horticultural Science - Massey University

Pauline's degree in Horticultural Science from Massey University had an Amenity/Landscape emphasis. After gaining her qualifications she worked in the UK at Great Windsor Park and in the US in private gardens in Seattle.

On returning to New Zealand, she set up a landscape construction business in Hawkes Bay, worked at Titoki Point in Taihape, and was the NZ Army's Land Manager in Waiouru before moving to Queenstown as the Queenstown Lakes District Council Parks and Reserves Manager.

She started a manufacturing and café businesses – Provisions - in Central Otago before moving to Christchurch where she initially managed an accommodation and activities centre owned by Scouts NZ. Her current role is Manager of the Field Services Centre at Lincoln University where a mix of academics, students and technical staff working with clover, hops, grapevines, plant propagation and sheep keep her on her toes.

She is a member of the NZ Alpine Garden Society, in Christchurch.

Pauline has been an assessor with the NZGT since 2004 – carrying out her first assessments with Bev McConnell and Gordon Collier.

## **KAREN LOWTHER**

Karen has over 30 years practical experience in garden design and implementation and had her own garden design practice for 20 years. She has been an international exhibitor and was invited by the RHS Chelsea to shadow judge at the Chelsea Flower Show. She was a Judge for the Ellerslie International Flower Show for 15 years.

Karen was part of the British team that created the Salvation Army Display at the RHS Chelsea Garden Show alongside top British designer Julian Dowle. The display won Silver Gilt and Peoples' Choice Best in Show.

She has won a number of Garden Exhibition Medals including two International Gold Awards representing New Zealand in Shizuoka Japan at the World Garden Design Show where she won a Gold Medal and the Governor's Gold Award for Design Excellence. She won eight Gold and six Silver medals at the Ellerslie Flower Show and has also been awarded the Supreme Award for Design Excellence for Construction by the Landscape Industries Association.

Since 2000, Karen has worked as designer and consultant to the Auckland Regional Botanic Gardens and has designed the Rose Gardens, the Historic Rose Garden, the Perennial Gardens, the Native Cultivar Gardens, the Permaculture Garden, the Edible Gardens and the Wedding Garden.

She was also a member of the TVNZ Maggie's Garden Show, occasionally presenting as well as designing and researching. She managed The Eden Garden Society Inc. gardens from 2005 to 2018 and now serves as a trustee

Karen has been an Assessor for the NZ Gardens Trust since 2013 and brings acute design ability as well as good plant knowledge particularly around annuals and perennials.

## **ROSE THODEY**

Bachelor of Arts - Victoria University of Wellington.

Rose grew up on a high-country farm near Taihape. She has a BA in English Language, Literature and Philosophy at Victoria University, Wellington. She worked for the State Services Commission in a variety of roles – writing, editing, advisory and graduate recruitment.

Rose became a serious gardener a couple of years after the family had moved to Auckland in 1986, eventually submitting an article on her efforts to NZ Gardener magazine. This began her career in garden writing which has lasted over 20 years and includes stints for Viva in the NZ Herald and as Gardens Editor for NZ House & Garden.

Rose has been an Ellerslie Flower Show judge and is the author of several books – *Gardening with Old Roses* (with Alan Sinclair), and *Landscape: Gardens by New Zealand's Top Designers* and *The Artful Gardener*, both with well-known NZ photographer, Gil Hanly.

She is a member of the Garden Design Society of NZ where she has served on various committees and was Chairperson from 2011-2013. She organized several trips for GDSNZ members to the Melbourne Garden Design Fest, before initiating the Auckland Garden Design Fest – a joint venture with Newmarket Rotary to raise the profile of local garden designers and raise money for charities, such as Garden to Table. She chaired the organizing committee for 7 years from 2011 to 2018.

Rose opened her own garden for events such as the Trinity Garden Festival and the Auckland Garden Design Fest, as well as the Trust itself. She has a real empathy and deep understanding of what goes on behind the scenes in order to open a much-loved garden to the public.

## **TONY BARNES**

Tony Barnes grew up on a tobacco farm in Motueka Valley. He has been a nurseryman, plantsman and gardener all his life, working at management level with some of NZ's largest production nurseries. His special interests are roses, camellias and clivia, which he has spoken and written about numerous times both nationally and internationally.

He lives in Taranaki, where his large garden, 'Ngamamaku', assessed as a Garden of National Significance in the early days of NZGT, was a key garden in the Taranaki Garden Festival for 25 years.

Tony has been an integral part of the Taranaki Garden Festival liaison team - responsible for checking the standard of the gardens in the festival.

## **BEN CONWAY**

National Certificate in Advanced Horticulture  
National Certificate in Advanced Arboriculture

Ben undertook his horticultural apprenticeship in Wellington at Government House, the Beehive and other parliamentary gardens. However, his eyes were really opened to the artistry of gardening and putting plants together after meeting Beverly McConnell from Ayrilies Garden. Ben has been involved with Ayrilies since 2006 helping win awards and accolades and keeping the garden at an international standard.

A passion for ecology, and plant health saw Ben spearhead the move to run Ayrilies as organically as possible over the past 15 years with a real focus on the soil and soil health. Working in the garden every day allows him to fully understand what it takes to not only manage and maintain a large plant collection associated with a large site, but also how to move it forward. Ben has developed expertise in design detailing and rejuvenation using fresh plantings to overcome these particular challenges.

Ben also has a huge interest in native forest and wetland restoration and volunteers time for conservation projects that address both noxious weed control and predator control.

Ben has been a judge for the Young Horticulturalist of the Year for the past 5 years.