

ORCHID COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND NEWSLETTER

June 2025

Editor: Sandra Simpson (ocnzeditor@gmail.com)

Website: orchidcouncil.org.nz

[Find us on Facebook](#)



President's Message: Keith Smart

A successful annual National Judging Seminar and OCNZ AGM was held over King's Birthday Weekend at the Brentwood Hotel in Wellington. The weekend offered our judges valuable insights into the judging process and the workings of the Council of Awards (COA).

Despite sharing the venue with 240 teenagers and their coaches and managers who were attending a national sports event, the Brentwood Hotel staff maintained a comfortable atmosphere, allowing most attendees to focus on the seminar – aside from the occasional sighting of swimmers right outside the conference room in the (heated) pool.

A special thanks to Murray and Otelia Dean for their outstanding organisation, and to Janice Brown and the Wellington Orchid Society for their support, which made this event memorable.

OCNZ AGM

Two remits were tabled at the AGM: a draft Constitution for the OCNZ (passed unanimously on a show of hands); and to raise capitation to \$15. An amendment to this latter remit was proposed by BOP Orchid Society (seconded Hawkes Bay), to raise capitation to \$12.50. The amendment was defeated by ballot (21-11) so the original remit was retabled and passed (19-11, two informal votes). It was noted that this will be the first rise in capitation in 20 years.

Various reports were presented: President (Keith Smart); Financial (Jenny Hope); Orchid Foundation (Terry Austin, not present); COA (Murray Dean); Iwitahi (Toby Marris); Yearbook (Allan Rae); Website/Newsletter/Facebook (Sandra Simpson) and MPI (Ross Bicknell/Glenys MacRae). Glenys outlined the extensive work that has gone into the 'proof of presence' application for 25 species, which was to be submitted this week, and which includes two appendices, one of them large.

No election was required and so the officers for 2025-26 are: President: Keith Smart (Waikato); Vice-presidents: Allan Rae (Manawatu) and Glenys MacRae (Waitakere); Treasurer: Jenny Hope (Hawke's Bay); Secretary: Phil Thomsen (Wanganui); Executive Committee: Janice Brown (Wellington); Murray Dean (Taranaki); Nik Krawchenko (Hawke's Bay); Toby Marris (Waitakere) and Sandra Simpson (Tauranga). Ross Bicknell, who had withdrawn his nomination to focus on leading his local society, was thanked for his work over the past year.

The Executive is delighted to appoint Roy Neale as OCNZ Patron.

A brief, verbal report on the 2027 Expo at Mystery Creek was given by Keith Smart, chairman of the organising committee. The dates are September 24-27, show open to the public on Friday and Saturday. The venue has been booked.

National Judges' Seminar

Among the topics on the programme were the need to attract new people, training requirements and how to run remote judging of plants, as well as practical training in writing award descriptions and taking measurements. The latest [Judges' Handbook](#), aka the Green Book, is available on the OCNZ website.

Guest speaker at the seminar and dinner was Te Papa Museum botanist (and orchid enthusiast) Dr Carlos Lehnebach. He showed photos of orchids native to his homeland of Chile – large and colourful – and said by comparison our native orchids “look very weird”, but that’s why he loves them. Since 2000, Carlos has described seven new indigenous species of orchid and two species of forget-me-not (*Myosotis*). He is concerned that New Zealand’s small number of professional botanists may mean some orchids will become extinct before they’re found. Native orchids, he said, are continually losing their habitats to rural and urban development, including the draining of wetlands; illegal mountain biking tracks; major weather events; and poaching/illegal collection.



He is working with a small team at Whangamarino Wetlands in Waikato to preserve *Corybas carsei* (left), one of our rarest orchids and deemed ‘conservation dependent’, with about 400 plants in the wild. Some plants are pollinated without human intervention but botanists don’t know how or by what; and the fungal community associated with *C. carsei* remains unclear, despite much research. “Our methods [to reproduce plants] work on other orchids but it seems *Corybas* are fussy and complicated – and *carsei* is top of that list.”

Photo: Catherine Beard

Presentations

The seminar dinner saw Allan Rae (right) receive the John Easton Award from OCNZ Patron Roy Neale. The award is given for *the most outstanding contribution to the culture and promotion of orchids in New Zealand*. Please refer to last month’s newsletter to read Allan’s long list of achievements, which includes breeding new *Cymbidiums*.



The only Orchid of the Year grower present was Adelaida (Aida) Booth, who received her certificate from Roy for growing the Species of the Year, *Angraecum sesquipedale* ‘Mae Delia’.

Photos: Sandra Simpson