



A. History

1987

Overseas Speakers Travel Fund

Orchids in New Zealand

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The newly set up Overseas Speakers Travel Fund is now established, with several large three or four figure sums promised or donated by Societies. This special account has been set up by OCNZ with the intention of bringing top overseas speakers to New Zealand. Speakers will tour the country with engagements in regional centres, where a small door charge will be made to replenish the fund. It is intended to vary the regions visited with each tour so a wide coverage of Societies can be made. Societies will be encouraged to organise bus trips to their nearest venue when not themselves on the current tour. Any Societies wanting to loan or donate surplus funds to this fund or requiring further information, should write to the OCNZ Secretary or Executive Member Mrs Edna Newton, 'Lauridale', Awahiri Road, Feilding. If sufficient funds come in, two or three speakers could be arranged for 1987.

Note: Over the decades the Overseas Speakers Travel Fund has become known as the Speakers Fund.

2022

OCNZ organised a speaking tour featuring Ross Bicknell of Canterbury speaking about Pleione. The tour covered meetings, some of them multi-club at one venue, in Bay of Plenty, Waikato and Auckland and was funded by the Speakers' Fund. This use of the fund was supported by OCNZ and the host societies at the time.

2024

At the February 2024 Executive Committee meeting it was agreed to make interest from the Speakers' Fund available for travel and accommodation costs relating to speakers for national events as appropriate and agreed by the executive.

Examples of OCNZ events are National Orchid Expo and Judging Seminars.

Note: Historically the expo organising committee has had to cover the cost of speakers. When there has been the opportunity for a speaker to tour following the conclusion of the expo this is when OCNZ has contributed some funding.

Use of the fund for this purpose was approved for the first time in November 2025 to pay for guest speaker, Philip Zhou's return airfare to Nelson for the South Island Judging Seminar. Non-judges from local orchid societies were invited to hear Philip speak.



B. Widening the Scope of the Speaker Fund

It has to be acknowledged that today's touring speaker climate is very different from that of 30-40 years ago when the idea of an Overseas Speakers' Travel Fund had its germination and took root. Travel costs, including airline tickets, insurance, accommodation, meals, and even petrol for rental cars have all escalated exponentially to mean that, in most cases, such tours as were intended to be supported by the initial fund can no longer be considered viable. The fund is small, with limited input for replenishment.

Given the current financial climate and the paucity of up-to-date information about the fund, the OCNZ Executive decided at its November 2025 meeting to consider re-defining the scope of the fund to include local speakers, rather than be limited to overseas speakers. Consideration would now be given to applications from North Island speakers touring South Island clubs and vice-versa to give affiliated members increased opportunities to hear speakers.

Intent:

The Speakers' Fund is intended to enable or support speakers of repute to give talks to two or more clubs or societies affiliated with the OCNZ. Such speakers may be international or local, but must be recognised as someone of authority in their subject area by more than just local club members. They should be able to present a topic that is of general interest to specialists and hobbyists alike.

Funding Stream and Limitations:

The Speakers' Fund is replenished from recurring interest and individual donations. There have been no significant endowments to the fund in recent years. As such, the fund is a limited resource, and can only support one to two successful applications per year relative to the cost involved.

What will be considered:

1. Applications to speak at two or more clubs in roughly the same geographical area (e.g. Lower North Island), a PowerPoint presentation or similar would be desirable.
2. Applications to speak at a single club if at least one other club is to attend as part of a joint meeting (e.g. the case where three or four Auckland clubs get together for a special event).
3. Applications to speak at a single national event (e.g. the National Judges Symposium), where talks are presented to members from a number of different clubs.



What will not be considered:

1. Applications to speak at a single club. Where a speaker has been invited to give a talk at a single club, those arrangements will be at the discretion and undertaking of the host club, and they will not be eligible to apply to the Speakers' Fund.
2. Applications to speak on obscure topics. It is expected that the talk should be of general interest to members, whether specialists or hobbyists. Obscure topics requiring a significant level of detailed or scientific knowledge will not be considered.
3. Applications to speak by unknown speakers. It is expected that speakers will have some degree of local or international recognition, or a degree of authority to speak on their chosen topic. Confirmation of this may be sought by the OCNZ Executive prior to considering an application. If evidence cannot be found or provided to confirm the standing of the speaker, the application will be declined.

How to apply:

Applications, including all relevant details such as travel and accommodation costs, a description of the intended topic(s), and the projected educational outcome(s), should be made via email to the OCNZ Secretary. Applications will then be considered by the OCNZ Executive, whose decision will be communicated back to the applicant by the OCNZ Secretary; secretary@orchidcouncil.org.nz

Successful applications may receive reimbursement of the full cost applied for, or partial reimbursement, at the discretion of the OCNZ Executive. It is expected that any shortfall would then be covered by a door charge or koha at the clubs included in the tour or be covered by the relevant clubs from their own finances.

Unsuccessful applications will also be communicated to the applicant via email from the OCNZ Secretary, accompanied by a brief explanation of either why the application did not meet the criteria or the reason it was declined.