

# Award of Associate of Honour of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture (AHRH)

## Alan Graeme Jolliffe



Alan Jolliffe AHRH.

Alan's early interest in growing plants started at home and at primary school with the school gardening programme. This was enhanced by his interest in biology at high school and working with his parents who grew commercial hothouse tomatoes and, later, strawberries and cut flowers.

He started his professional career in 1969 as an apprentice with the Oamaru Parks and Recreation Department and after two years (including Compulsory Military Service in 1971) transferred to Christchurch City Council. In Christchurch, Alan joined the first landscape unit under horticulturist Norm Hill and was involved in many city landscaping projects. Twelve months at the Christchurch Botanic Gardens, and at the council's Linwood Nursery, confirmed his interests in all aspects of horticulture. After serving his time as an apprentice, in 1973 he was seconded to Lincoln College (later to gain university status) to the horticultural unit under Dr Bob Crowder for three months. Upon returning to the council he was appointed Area Foreman of Sumner. During this time he completed his apprenticeship examinations along with the Junior and Intermediate New Zealand National Diploma in Horticulture exams.

In 1974, Alan was appointed Technical Assistant in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens. This was a new position under Assistant Director Lawrie Metcalf and involved setting up and managing the outdoor collections as well as many of the technical, botanical and interpretational aspects of the Gardens. In 1978, he was appointed Curator of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens when Lawrie Metcalf relocated to become Director of Parks and Recreation in Invercargill.

Alan completed his National Diploma in Horticulture (Hons) Amenity Horticulture in 1978 and was awarded the Dugald MacKenzie Prize for the best thesis ('Planning and development of recreation within an exotic forest').

In 1979, he was awarded the JR Templin Scholarship to study at Indiana University in Bloomington and granted leave of absence from the Christchurch Botanic Gardens to attend. At Indiana University he completed his Master of Science in Parks and Recreation Management with a minor in Outdoor Education and in 1980 was awarded the Lebert H Weir Award for being the outstanding graduate student. While in the USA, Alan undertook a three-week study tour of parks and recreation departments and botanic gardens in northern USA and Canada.

Returning to New Zealand, Alan resumed his work at Christchurch Botanic Gardens. Then in 1982 he was appointed Superintendent of Parks and Recreation for Nelson City Council where he led the redevelopment of many horticultural features and programmes, recreation facilities, tourism planning and development of public attractions.

Alan joined the New Zealand Institute of Parks and Recreation Administration (later to become the New Zealand Recreation Association and now part of Recreation Aotearoa) and was made a Fellow (FIPRA) in November 1980.

Alan joined the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture in October 1978 and in 1982 was elected on to the executive, becoming chairman for six years (1984–1990) and was made a Fellow (FRIH) in May 1987. He was also a member of the examining board of the RNZIH for both Oral and Practical Examinations and several advanced horticultural subjects. Also during this time, the government instigated the Hawke Report on Education in New Zealand, which resulted in the introduction of Industry Training Organisations. The effect of those changes was to remove the RNZIH National Diploma programme involving five National Diplomas (Amenity Horticulture, Nursery, Orchard, Vegetable, and Apiculture) and transfer the management of horticultural training to the new Horticultural Industry Training Organisation.

In 1986, Alan was appointed Director of Parks and Recreation for the Lower Hutt City Council, with a wide range of roles in horticulture, parks, recreation and tourism. In 1989, as a result of local government restructuring he led the development of a new structure of parks and recreation with the amalgamation of four local authorities to form the Parks Operations Division and the Recreation Division. He was appointed Divisional Manager Recreation to provide policy advice, general management, asset management and funding of parks, recreation and tourism as well as operating all the recreation facilities. During this period he led the development of one of New Zealand's most successful recreation programmes for older New Zealanders. In 1992 the division won the New Zealand Recreation Association Outstanding Facility Award for the Hutt Park Golf Centre.

From 1991, he set up his own company to undertake consulting work in horticulture, parks and recreation. He was also appointed to the staff of the Central Institute of Technology (CIT) as a Principal

Lecturer in Tourism, Marketing, Leisure and Recreation and in 1992 became Head of Department Tourism Management teaching at both CIT and Victoria University.

During this time Alan and his wife Robyn set up a small nursery specialising in shrubs and evergreen perennials operating from home and renting empty glasshouses at Lower Hutt Hospital.

In 1996, Alan was appointed Associate Dean, Academic and Research, in the Faculty of Commerce at Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) and held positions including Acting Dean Commerce, Head of School Recreation and Tourism, Principal Lecturer Business and Tourism, and Programme and Manager Bachelor of Business Innovation and Enterprise. In 2000 he was seconded to Tai Poutini Polytechnic as Acting Academic Manager for four months.

In 2002, he returned to local government as Manager, Community and Recreation at the Waimakariri District Council with wide responsibilities for all community programmes parks, gardens, conservation and recreation, airport and tourism and council-funded organisations.

In 2005, Alan joined the New Zealand Historic Places Trust as Heritage Destinations and Property Manager for the South Island. This was a new position requiring planning at national level, investment, asset management, education and interpretation, conservation of buildings and grounds and visitor management.

In 2008, he joined the University of Canterbury Department of Civil and Natural Resources Engineering as Administration Services Manager, another newly established position, managing all the non-academic aspects of the department.

In addition, for periods, he also managed the administrative side of the Mechanical Engineering Department and was College Operations Manager.

During his time there the Canterbury earthquakes struck which had a major impact on the department with many academic staff involved in urgent engineering assessments of buildings, structures and infrastructure. The earthquakes required rapid response to ensure teaching and learning continued, and over the next five years Alan was involved in ongoing business planning and operating methods.

Throughout his career Alan has maintained a close working involvement in horticulture and conservation. As well as those already mentioned he has also been involved in:

- 1998–2007: Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board appointed by the Minister of Conservation. Chairman from 2001 to 2007.
- 1999–2013: Christchurch Garden City Trust trustee and chairman, running the annual Festival of Flowers in the City.
- 2004–2007: Chair Pohatu Marine Reserve Committee appointed by the Minister of Conservation.
- 2005–2018: Trustee of Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust. Now an 800 hectare park being restored with New Zealand native plants using innovative conservation and horticultural restoration techniques involving community, school and tertiary education programmes.
- 2005 – present: JR Templin Trust Horticultural and Engineering Scholarship selection committee (awardees study in the USA).
- 2018 – present: RNZIH representative on the Loder Cup selection committee.

During his career Alan has published more than fifty papers and articles on a range of topics including horticulture, plants, tourism, garden tourism, recreation and leisure. He has been editor, columnist and article referee for several publications including *Consumer New Zealand* (1992–1996).

Alan retired from full time employment in 2016 but remains very active in horticulture. He continues to contribute to the Canterbury Horticultural Society (Life Member), Friends of the Christchurch Botanic Gardens the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture and other organisations, such as ICOMOS NZ (International Council on Monuments and Sites – New Zealand) a heritage organisation supporting professionals in areas including heritage gardens, parks and landscapes for which Alan served as national treasurer from 2008 to 2018.

Alan re-joined the national executive of the RNZIH in 2017 and is currently vice president.

He contributes to numerous community and horticultural organisations, is a Justice of the Peace and has his own website at [www.artandscienceofhorticulture.weebly.com](http://www.artandscienceofhorticulture.weebly.com)

An Associate of Honour is awarded to “Persons who have rendered distinguished service to horticulture”.

As demonstrated here, Alan has an exceptionally long and varied career in many facets of horticulture, including administration, management, tourism, education, conservation, and parks and recreation. He also contributes to numerous community and horticultural organisations. In recognition of these achievements, the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture is proud to bestow their highest award upon Alan Graeme Jolliffe.

**Citation prepared by  
Murray Dawson**