



Tuia Pito Ora
New Zealand Institute
of Landscape Architects

17 May 2024

John Hudson

Life Membership Citation

John began studying Architecture after High School and, after spending time in an architectural office, he confirmed his initial suspicions that the work “*really boring*”. This led to a search for related study options and John found the Landscape Architecture programme at Lincoln College intriguing. After a visit down to Lincoln, he was informed that an Undergraduate Science Degree would be required to be accepted into the Landscape Architecture Post-Graduate course, and so he transferred his existing credits to a Geography Degree at Victoria University, before completing the Post-Graduate Diploma in Landscape Architecture at Lincoln.

Following landscape studies John spent almost 7 years working for NZ Electricity, and during this time realised that John it would be challenging to lead a small landscape team with only the landscape training behind him. So, he also completed a Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from Victoria University, over 3 years of part-time study while at NZ Electric. John then had a small stint with one other company, before establishing Hudson Associates in October 1987. This unfortunately coincided with a period of extreme economic uncertainty, as the Stock Market crash referred to as ‘Black Monday’ took place during this same month. Despite being a difficult time to begin a business, John has operated Hudson Associates for the past 37 years a specialist practice that delivers landscape assessment and sustainable design projects for both private and public sector clients across New Zealand.

John fondly remembers his time in Wellington, where he began employing staff, and played a role in setting up the Wellington Branch of the NZILA at a time when landscape architecture was still building its reputation in NZ. *“I was heavily involved with the Institute in the 1990’s, being both Secretary and Treasurer for one period, then President for another, while setting up and assisting with the professional registration system for 10 years. I was also on the awards panel and found that to be rewarding but extremely time consuming with all the required reading involved.”* He has always remained involved with local Branch activities and has also enjoyed contributing on three separate NZILA Conference Committees.

John and his wife Lauren decided to move to Hawke’s Bay in 2005, largely for the lifestyle and to provide a more rural environment for their children (Sophie and Nick) to grow up. *“Most of my work at that time was in Auckland, so I wasn’t constrained by geographic location, and we have certainly enjoyed living in Hawke’s Bay for the past few decades.”*

Additionally, John was fortunate enough to be selected for a Group Study Exchange (GSE) to Singapore and Malaysia by Rotary NZ, with selection partly because they considered him an outstanding representative in his professional field. The hospitality offered on tour was “*amazing*”, and John was given the opportunity to bring back many applicable learnings through exposure to forestry operations, tin mines, zoos, and various other business activities.



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A selection of Johns career highlights include; being appointed by the Minister for the Environment as a Commissioner on the Turitea Wind Farm Board of Inquiry Hearing, undertaking landscape assessments for West Wind and Mill Creek wind farm applications, utilising his MfE 'Making Good Decisions' Chairing Endorsement to act as Chair for a Resource Consent Hearing, appearing before a Select Committee as President of the NZILA, writing and defending multiple District-wide Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape assessments, defending the recognition of Matakana Island as an Outstanding Natural Feature/Landscape, Assisting with the Hauraki Gulf Islands Plan Review for Auckland City, being involved in numerous marine farm applications throughout the country, and getting to mentor young graduate landscape architects. He also had the unique opportunity to dive down to the site of the Rena Shipwreck off the coast of Tauranga, in preparation of Environment Court Evidence and was astonished at how quickly the sea life had reclaimed the wreckage.

When looking back at his early career, John recalls that Tony Jackman was a key influence and mentor. *"I had come across Tony during my time at Lincoln and continued to interact with him through my first job with NZ Electric. To me, he was the first practitioner I encountered who deliberately blended design and planning in a way that allowed for environmental consideration."*

It is this blending of planning and design has stuck with John throughout his career, and it is where John thinks that the Institute really flourishes, as well considered planning is able to inform great design outcomes. An example being s6 & s7 of the RMA which *"has enabled a huge advancement for the profession, as we have been afforded recognition as experts able to assist with environmental design."*

Furthermore, John notes that; *"While small scale design is certainly enjoyable, I have always been driven toward landscape assessment as, in my opinion, it has a significantly wider reaching influence on the protection of our landscapes."*

Following John's time as President of the NZILA, he has received an NZILA Excellence Award for written work, a Pride of Place award for landscape design and was recognised as a Fellow, being grateful that the Fellowship citation acknowledged his contribution to both planning and design. A previous employee of John notes that; *"His remarkable expertise and unwavering professionalism stand as a testament to his dedication to the advancement of landscape architecture in Aotearoa, greatly enriching the experiences of all fortunate enough to collaborate with him."*

Johns outstanding service and contribution to both NZILA and the landscape architecture profession is warmly celebrated and acknowledged by his peers in this Life Membership award of Tuia Pito Ora.