



NSW

T O U R I S M  
A W A R D S

*Recognising Excellence in the Visitor Economy*

2024

**Meet Our Judges**





## Natalie Bramble

CHAIR OF JUDGES  
2021-2024

Natalie Bramble has been involved in the NSW Tourism Awards since 2010. She has sat on other panels including the Vanuatu Tourism Awards, Restaurant and Catering NSW, Australian Hotels Awards and many government and private grant and tender assessment panels.

Natalie worked in a variety of her families businesses'; has managed a state heritage listed cultural heritage tourism attraction, studied cultural and heritage tourism in the UK and launched an events management company, which managed the Inland NSW Tourism Awards and a regional food and wine network.

Natalie's career and life's work is at the intersection of social, tourism and economic impact to develop healthy, sustainable and resilient communities. She supports regional community leaders, entrepreneurs and social enterprises to develop, sustain and grow their organisations and their impact.



# MEET THE JUDGES

*Our judges bring extensive experience across tourism, hospitality, business, and marketing. They are experts in destination marketing, business development, hospitality management, grant writing and sustainable tourism, with decades of industry knowledge both regionally and internationally. From award-winning entrepreneurs to seasoned professionals, their diverse backgrounds ensure a fair and insightful judging process. Passionate about driving excellence, they are committed to recognizing the best in NSW tourism.*



## Lisa Campbell

VICE CHAIR OF JUDGES

*Lisa brings extensive experience in the tourism and events industry, as well as in tourism and hospitality training and education. Her career spans two continents, including 15 years in Europe and extensive experience in Australia, covering strategic and operational sectors. Since 2005, Lisa has served as a Lead Judge, Auditor and Industry Mentor for the Australian Tourism Industry Awards, NSW, ACT, and Regional Award programs for business excellence in tourism & hospitality. Previously, she was the Chair of Judges for the NSW Tourism Awards. Looking forward to the 2024 NSW Tourism Awards, Lisa noted, 'Our NSW tourism industry continues to lead in modernisation and continuous improvement initiatives. I look forward to welcoming new and returning entrants to the NSW Tourism Awards.'*

## Ron Beeldman

LEAD JUDGE/INCOMING  
CHAIR OF JUDGES

*50 plus years of successful and rewarding experience in the education, co-ordination, supervision and marketing of varied programs in the travel, hospitality and special events fields. Including significant involvement in the development and administration of the inaugural Regional and NSW Tourism Awards in the 1990's.*



## Becky Last

LEAD JUDGE

*With thirty years' experience in the sector, Becky is an expert in sustainable tourism development. As Tourism Specialist for the World Bank Group, she worked in developing countries and early-stage destinations, assisting public and private sector entities to maximise sustainable benefits from tourism. Now a consultant, she provides guidance to Governments seeking to identify, articulate and implement their strategic goals for the sector, while for businesses she provides coaching and mentoring in operational efficiency, product development, risk management, sustainable tourism standards, and equitable inclusion. Most recently Becky led development of Fiji's new 10-year tourism sector strategy - the*



*National Sustainable Tourism Framework.*



## Carolyn Jane Childs

LEAD JUDGE

*Carolyn has more than 35 years experience in working with travel and tourism organisations around the world to help them achieve better outcomes. She has been judging tourism awards for more than 15 years and believes a good entry satisfies both head and heart.*



## Fiona Ferguson

LEAD JUDGE

*Fiona brings years of tourism, qualifications, experience and management to the judging panel. She is dedicated to the work that tourism providers undertake and the innovation and dedication required to run successful tourism businesses. In the past she has been a lead judge and judge on this panel and understands the work dedicated to the submission process. Fiona is looking forward to being involved with judging again this year.*





## Georgia Lazzari

LEAD JUDGE

*Georgia is a visitor economy professional, specialising in Destination Management. With over 20 years' experience in the tourism sector across local and state government, as well as having had her own business, Georgia has an acute understanding of the complexities of the visitor economy. Deploying an all of government and industry approach, Georgia works with visitor economy communities to develop strategies and deliver initiatives with tangible outputs that build resilience, increase capability and capacity, and ensure the ongoing sustainable growth of destinations. In her current position of Destination & Economy Manager at City of Newcastle, she is responsible for leading a multidisciplinary team across visitor economy, economic development and major events.*



## Ian Mason

LEAD JUDGE

*Ian has a passion for regional tourism, with over 15 years' management experience in visitor servicing, marketing and tourism development across local government and regional tourism organisations in Queensland and Victoria. Ian has sat on multiple tourism committees, and is currently a Board Director at Australian Regional Tourism and Secretary of Queensland Distillers Association. He has been a judge for the NSW Tourism Awards for 10 years, a Queensland awards judge (5 years), and an Australian Tourism Awards judge. Ian holds a Bachelor of Business in Travel & Tourism Management (Marketing), a Masters in Communications, and a Certificate in Public Relations.*



## Jan Kerr

LEAD JUDGE

*Jan has over 38 years of experience in tourism, managing the family-owned Balloon Joy Flights Pty. Ltd. Together with her husband, she co-founded the Canowindra International Balloon Challenge in 2010, successfully organizing it for 10 years before retiring. During this time, Jan was responsible for media, marketing, the Balloon Glow event. An experienced judge for the Regional and North Coast Tourism Awards, and also the NSW Tourism Awards, a role she enjoys for the opportunity to mentor entrants. In addition to her tourism work, Jan is the State Vice President of the CWA of NSW and a former Group President for the Central Western Group. She was also part of the organizing committee for the 2023 CWA State Conference.*





## Karina Groth

LEAD JUDGE

*Karina draws on over two decades of experience as a business consultant specialising in the tourism industry. Karina carved a niche for herself as a specialist in grant and bid preparation and award writing and business mentoring services. She held senior management roles within regional and local tourism organisations, the inbound and retail sectors and is a specialist facilitator on a wide variety of topics. Whilst she currently spends time supporting women's health and wellness journeys through her new careers at Punch Love Women's Fitness, she continues to volunteer assisting entrants in creating amazing award submissions and is proudly a judge on the Australian and NSW Tourism Awards.*



## Keith Baker

LEAD JUDGE

*Keith's career in tourism, business and government spans many aspects of the industry at the local, regional and state levels for over 30 plus years. He has extensive experience in working with organisations and community groups to develop destination and place-based solutions. He has a Bachelor of Business (Tourism) and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. Keith has represented industry and community groups at conferences and events in Australia and overseas and has been a guest lecturer in tourism and planning at Western Sydney University and has been Chairperson it's External Advisory Committee for the Sustainable Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management programs.*



## Lori Modde

LEAD JUDGE

*Lori is a seasoned professional with over 30 years of experience in community and economic development. She has held pivotal roles, including Regional Marketing Manager at Tourism NSW and Senior Manager of Place Activation at Sydney Olympic Park Authority. Through her company, Lorick Management, Lori has managed major tourism events and organisations. Currently, she is the Project Manager for Sturt's Steps in Outback NSW, CEO of Outdoors NSW & ACT, and General Manager of Visitor Economy Development. Lori is a dedicated mentor and volunteer, actively involved in several industry associations and has received numerous accolades for her contributions.*





## Margaret Shannon

LEAD JUDGE

*Margaret is a dedicated and experienced professional with a proven track record in tourism management and business development, and demonstrated success in operational management, strategic planning and marketing. Margaret brings over 20 years' experience in the hotel, cruise and caravan industry, was 2022 Myall Lakes Woman of the Year in recognition of her contribution to regional tourism, and currently sit as a director on the National Caravan and Camping Industry Association and Destination North Coast boards. Throughout her career, she has developed a reputation for tourism excellence, regional advocacy, and innovative marketing and product development; driven by a passionate commitment to the tourism industry and community.*



## Michelle Braiuka

LEAD JUDGE

*Michelle brings over 20 years of experience in the tourism and hospitality industry to her role as a judge for NSW Tourism. With a background in strategic planning, sustainable tourism development, and investment attraction, Michelle has been instrumental in promoting regional destinations and enhancing visitor experiences. Her extensive work with local communities and businesses has driven growth and innovation in the sector. Michelle is a passionate advocate for the domestic tourism industry.*



## Roberta Dixon-Valk

LEAD JUDGE

*Roberta has had a lifetime love affair with our oceans and estuaries. A marine ecologist and conservationist who has spent over 30 years working to look after the health of our oceans, estuaries, rivers and all the plants and animals that call these ecosystems home, Roberta has been professionally involved in marine/freshwater environmental assessments, marine park management, education/awareness raising, coastal bush regeneration and various other habitat protection initiatives. In 2009 Roberta, with Amanda Marechal, established Take 3 for the Sea as a proactive response to the ongoing issue of plastic pollution leaking into our oceans and choking marine wildlife.*



## Robyn Johnson

LEAD JUDGE

*Robyn is a seasoned business events and tourism consultant with over 25 years experience in strategic advice and project management across NSW. She has held prominent roles including CEO of Meetings & Events Australia and General Manager Event Delivery at Business Events Sydney. As the founder of Conexion Event Management, Robyn garnered numerous awards for her innovative approach to event management. She has recently led the government funded South Coast Centre of Excellence project on the NSW South Coast driving economic recovery through workforce development in tourism and more recently was the Program Manager for the Choose Tourism NSW Program for Destination NSW. Robyn also serves as Vice Chair of the Australian Respiratory Council.*



## Shan Lawson

LEAD JUDGE

*Shan was the NSW Tourism Awards Coordinator from 2003 – 2011 and then went on to become a judge, mentor and Chair of the Mid North Coast Tourism Awards. Shan was present when judging transitioned from paper-based to online. During her time as Coordinator, NSW as a state went from receiving zero Australian Awards to winning 10 categories in only 2 years – so she understands what a winning submission is made of. Shan stepped away over the COVID period and is delighted to be back judging and part of the team in 2024.*



## Yvette Myhill

LEAD JUDGE

*Yvette is the General Manager of Destination Riverina Murray, one of the regional tourism networks of Destination NSW. She has previously held arts/events based management roles in state and local government, and has been responsible for leading major music festivals and lifestyle events. She also ran a consulting company providing advice and services to festivals and the hospitality industry. She is an accredited economic developer and has qualifications in business, majoring in accounting.*





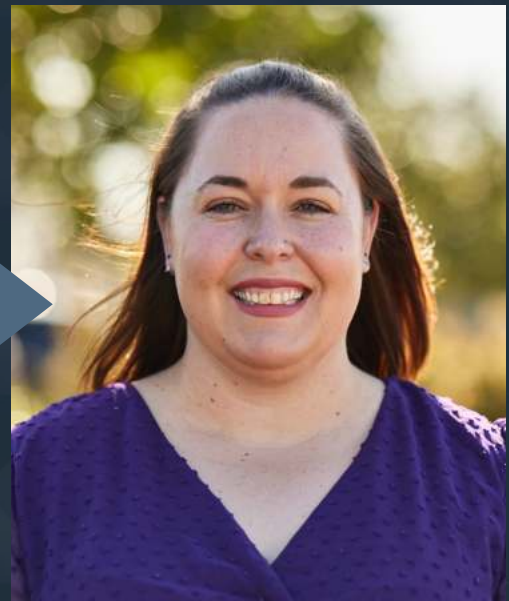
## Barbara Magee

*Barbara has worked in the communications and marketing industry for more than 25 years. She led the Penrith City rebranding project which embraced a unique, strong tourism brand, substantially increasing visitor numbers to Penrith and boosting the local visitor economy.*



## Candice Clark

*Candice is a seasoned professional with extensive experience in event management, project management, and community engagement. With a career spanning over 10 years, she has honed her skills in developing and executing strategic plans, managing complex projects, and fostering strong community relationships. Candice is known for her ability to enhance operational capacities, navigate challenging situations, and deliver successful events that exceed organizational and community expectations. Her dedication to excellence and her strategic approach have consistently driven impactful outcomes in all her endeavours.*



## Candice Pether

*With over 30 years of passion and emersion in tourism, Candice has been involved in the accommodation industry in South Africa, UK and Australia. Her career has given her the privilege of working and delivering strong proven results in all key areas of sales and operations, both on property and at Head Office, specialising in all market segmentations. She has a commitment to excellence and above industry standard service, encouraged through collaboration and influence. Having judged both the AHA awards for seven years and these awards for the second time, its a privilege to be a part of this esteemed community.*





## Carol Giuseppi

*Carol has had a 40-year career as a business professional, with a strong marketing and strategic business background. Commencing her career with British Airways, previous appointments include senior roles with Accommodation Australia, Tourism Accommodation Australia, Amber Group Australia, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Fox Studios, Southern Pacific Hotels and American Express. Carol has an Executive MBA, a Masters of Business (Marketing) and a Diploma of Market Research and is a graduate of the Institute of Company Directors. She has been a director on the board of HTN (Hospitality Employment Solutions), on the Tourism Advisory Board of Service Skills Australia, the Home Affairs Tourism Visa Advisory Group, the Ministerial Advisory Council for Skilled Migration, the City of Sydney Retail Advisory Panel, and the THRIVE 2030 Industry Data & Expert Analysis Working Group.*



## Carolyn Lenehan

*Carolyn is Chief Reputation & Brand Officer at BESydney, leading its corporate and marketing communications teams to promote Sydney's business events capabilities globally, and create value-driven networks across industry, government, academia, business and media. With over 25 years' experience in strategic communications, public and corporate affairs, government relations and board advisory, Carolyn has run her own communications consultancy and held senior positions in industry development, international relations, brand transformation, trade missions and events with government agencies including the Australian Trade & Investment Commission, NSW Department Industry and Investment, Destination NSW, Qantas and Australian Airlines.*



## Chris Chung

*Chris is a project officer in the NSW EPA's Litter Prevention Unit and manages the Cigarette Butt Litter Prevention Program and Litter Prevention grant projects. Chris has many years of experience leading sustainability projects ranging from energy conservation and streetlighting to catchment management and community gardens.*





## Christine Artis

Meet Christine, Director of Funding and Grants Collective. As a neurodivergent thinker with exceptional emotional intelligence, She brings innovative perspectives to funding priority projects. Her unique approach transforms businesses into grant-ready powerhouses, disrupting conventional methods while adhering to required frameworks. With a background in Government and business development, Christine excels at crafting strategic solutions that elevate businesses and communities. Her empathetic nature and creative problem-solving skills building long-term relationships and drive sustainable growth. As she continues to pioneer change and drive growth, Christine proves that embracing one's authentic self can unlock limitless success.

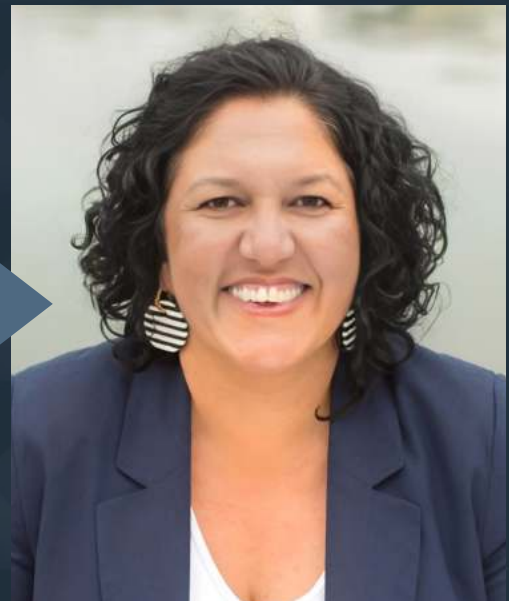


## Clair Mudaliar

Clair has a background in hospitality, administration and event management and is an avid traveller, having lived in 4 countries and visited over 50. A small business owner for ten years, she specialises in revenue generation, project management and visitor engagement and has honed these skills the last four years as Tourism Manager for Eden on the far south coast of New South Wales. She is passionate about the importance of visitor information centres and champions a self-sustaining model overseeing Eden's award-winning not-for-profit visitor centre that sees



more than 100,000 visitors through its door every year.



## Craig Slavek

Craig derives great joy from exploring the diverse regions of New South Wales. Through his various employment opportunities in media and training, he has been fortunate to travel extensively. This experience has reached new heights since he became a direct contributor to the tourism sector as a Star Ratings assessor in 2019. he feels extremely fortunate to be able to pursue his passion for training and travel as part of his career.





## David Campbell

*Dave is a creative director, entrepreneur, and business development consultant with deep expertise in culture, strategy, and growth across hospitality, tourism, and startups. He founded DuckingGoodSocial in 2008, a consultancy that collaborates with primary producers to enhance product value through creative development, business planning, technology, and talent strategies. Dave has worked as an Executive Chef in London, New York, Los Angeles, and Australia. He also founded and operated four restaurants in Sydney and South Coast NSW, where he built partnerships that fostered both domestic and international tourism, while driving business innovation and success.*



## Deanna Varga

*CEO & Founder of Mayvin Global, Deanna has worked in tourism and business events for over 25 years. Deanna has held roles in several organisations including Australian National Maritime Museum, Tourism Australia (Business Events Australia), Business Events Sydney (then SCVB) and global hotel chains. Her company works on strategic tourism projects for organisations such as Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Laissez-faire Catering, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, NSW NPWS, AGB Creative, Central Coast Council, Singleton Council and Dubbo Regional Council. Since 2020, Deanna has been an Adjunct Associate Professor (Industry) with UTS for her services to tourism and business events. She is on the Asia Pacific Regional Advisory Board of the Professional Convention Management Association and is an international lecturer and author for the International Congress and Convention Association.*



## Debbie Pakis

*Debbie is a dedicated vocational educator specialising in Hospitality, Tourism, and Events with 30 years of teaching at TAFE NSW. Her experience spans roles in clubs, hotels, resorts, restaurants, cafes, conference and catering, visitor information and event management across the Central and South Coasts of NSW. She provides quality, comprehensive training tailored to individual and organisational needs, focusing on innovative approaches and service excellence. As a seasoned traveller, she incorporates first-hand experiences to stay current with industry initiatives, trends and issues. An active mentor, she thrives on solving learning barriers and promoting equitable employment. Debbie also works in the club industry and volunteers for local events and charities. She has served as a judge for NSW Tourism Awards and Restaurant and Catering NSW Awards since 2005.*





## Elyss Larkham

*Elyss is a highly experienced Business Development Manager at Oakvale Wildlife Park, where she has successfully driven visitor engagement and developed innovative guest experiences since 2019. With a robust background in the tourism and hospitality industry, Elyss has held pivotal roles at Moonshadow TQC Cruises, Peppers Anchorage, and Carlson Wagonlit Travel, among others. Her expertise spans sales, marketing, event coordination, and strategic partnerships. Elyss is known for her exceptional ability to enhance regional tourism and deliver outstanding customer service. She holds a proven track record of boosting tourism and engaging diverse markets.*



## Emilie Howe

*Emilie, originally from Tasmania and now based in Sydney, has a deep passion and extensive experience in the tourism industry. As the inaugural CEO of Visitor Experience Training (VXT) in Tasmania, she led the enhanced the state's tourism standards through comprehensive training services and extensive collaboration with stakeholders. Emilie has travelled widely across Australia, enriching her understanding of regional tourism. She served as a judge for the Tasmanian Tourism Awards from 2021 to 2023. Emilie is eager to contribute her expertise to the NSW Tourism Awards, supporting and recognising excellence in the industry.*



## Eric Sward

*A competent results - orientated Tourism Industry professional with a deep knowledge of hotel, motel, apartment and resort management. Extensive track record in individual and multi-site management and senior management of a broad range of visitor economy products and businesses, including planning, opening and marketing large tourism products. Experience in writing submissions for Tourism Awards and Funding Applications for Tourism Products. Board member of several Tourism Industry Organisations spanning 20+ years, including many years in the role(s) of Treasurer, Vice President, President and also Life Member. Formal training includes several business leadership/ management executive programs, two TAFE Diplomas and two Masters Degrees from Macquarie University*





## Erin Kramer

*Erin's journey began at Tourism Australia, followed by impactful roles at Club Med, Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours and Viking Cruises as both Trade & Consumer Marketing Manager. Now the Co-Founder of Travel Marketers, she possesses 15+ years of travel industry experience. Travel Marketers, with its expertise, crafts tailored marketing plans, aiding tourism industry clients in refining existing strategies or creating comprehensive new ones for business growth.*



## Fazila Farhad

*Fazila, has over 20 years of experience in banking, product management, business development, and hotel ownership. She has owned and managed brands like Crowne Plaza (IHG), Ibis Styles (Accor), and Ramada (Wyndham), and built the first hotel in Western Sydney during the 2000 Olympics. In 2017, Fazila co-founded the South West Sydney Tourism Taskforce Inc, collaborating with local councils, stakeholders, and Western Sydney Airport. She has held board positions with the Australia Hotels Association, Accommodation Association NSW, Liverpool and Cabramatta Chambers of Commerce, and Liquor Accor Fairfield. In 2023, she co-founded the Western Sydney Tourism Taskforce and launched the inaugural Western Sydney Tourism Awards for 2024. Fazila was a finalist Best Business Leader, WSABE Awards (2020) and Outstanding Contribution to Tourism, NSW Tourism Awards (2023).*



## Gretchen Armitage

*Gretchen brings over 20 years of experience managing diverse projects across the private and public sectors, specializing in strategic planning, governance, and stakeholder engagement. Her extensive work with regional councils has given her a deep understanding of the operational and financial aspects of businesses within regional economies. With a strong track record of securing government funding, Gretchen has developed expertise in business case development, cost-benefit analysis, and long-term project sustainability. Her experience in economic development, combined with her understanding of regional challenges, allows her to approach tourism businesses with a comprehensive view of their viability and growth potential.*





## Ivy Carruth

*Ivy is an award-winning writer specialising in child-free, over 40 and luxe travel. Based in Sydney, she's a dual-citizen with passports in Australia and the USA. In her spare time, she enjoys devouring books, kissing dogs and practising Pilates.*



## Jackie Svedas

*With a wide range of careers in urban planning, corporate strategy, economic development, and stakeholder engagement, Jackie has 18 years of international experience in government and private sectors. In her current role as Executive Manager of Business Engagement at nbn Co, Jackie is passionately dedicated to lifting the digital capability of businesses across Australia.*



## James (Buck) McFarlane

*James took a career break as a product manager in financial services to be a tour guide in 2008. Buck served his 10-year tourism apprenticeship in the youth tourism space before finding his purpose in accessible and inclusive tourism by launching Cocky Guides in 2018 - a purpose to deliver destinations differently for blind and low-vision travellers that were underserved in the visitor economy around the world.*





## Jenny Robb

*A former tour operator in regional NSW with 2 businesses directly impacted by the Black Summer fires, followed by severe flooding. Jenny has extensive experience in voluntary tourism industry roles in the Sapphire Coast region including involvement in the growth of the cruise industry in the Port of Eden. With a passion for nature-based tourism development, Jenny works closely with businesses to help them develop sustainable experiences that focus on the USP of the regions in which she works. She believes that with the right support, operators can achieve success in both the domestic and international visitor markets.*



## Jenny-Lee Scharnboeck

*With thirty + years tourism experience, Jenny-Lee has worked with most sectors of the industry. From YHA to National Parks, Attractions and Local Government. Passionate about Awards as a platform to help businesses grow and prosper, Jenny-Lee is looking forward to supporting this year's NSW Tourism Awards as a Judge.*



## Katrina Denoux

*Katrina has over two decades of experience in tertiary education, well-being, agri-tourism, heritage, and sustainability. As an Ambassador for Regional Tourism Australia, she is frequently called to judge tourism awards in these sectors. Currently a Learning Teaching & Innovation Manager, she develops university programs and leads educational innovation. With a background in clinical nutrition and gastronomy tourism (Le Cordon Bleu), Katrina has held senior roles in healthcare and hospitality, co-founding Resource Environmental Solutions, a recycling initiative operating globally. Her tourism venues have earned TripAdvisor Certificates of Excellence and maintain Airbnb SuperHost status. Katrina enjoys hiking, foraging, and transformational travel.*





## Lucy Coffey

*With over 30 years in hospitality, Lucy has a strong track record as a manager and leader. At BIG4 Holiday Parks, she has used Power BI to enhance stakeholder engagement and the BIG4 brand. Based in regional New South Wales, Lucy has successfully managed two National Conferences under budget, with the latest achieving an NPS of 50.*

*As a key account manager, she excels in relationship management and data analysis. Her experience as a small business owner enhances her ability to manage budgets and ensure customer satisfaction, driven by integrity and a commitment to achieving results.*



## Mark Wayper

*Mark specializes in digital marketing, leading a team dedicated to driving web direct revenue and optimizing user experiences for major hospitality brands, including Oaks and Avani. His expertise lies in crafting effective digital strategies and developing strong brand identities that resonate with audiences. With a Master of Business in Marketing and a Bachelor of Music in Production, Mark blends strategic acumen with creative insight, honed through various roles in the hotel industry.*



## Natalie Godward

*Natalie is a passionate advocate for communities and the benefits of Tourism. Her expertise is in community and stakeholder engagement, recognising that successful projects start and end with this key component. Having worked with many regional communities, Natalie understands the value of community and partnerships, and is confident in delivering sustainable project outcomes that benefit all parties. In her spare time Natalie is a volunteer firefighter and President of Merimbula Rural Fire Brigade, involved in many volunteer tourism and events groups and a mother of two teenage daughters, who know everything and keep her on her toes!*





## Nicola Chandler

*A creative, and astute strategic thinker with 30 years' experience in hospitality management, mentoring and leadership, destination marketing, and tourism product development. Her experience encompasses the gamut of Australian and global brands, private enterprise, along with local, state and commonwealth government sectors. Nicola is a collaborative, persuasive, and solutions-focused communicator with visionary ideas that influence industry commitment to innovation and change. Nicola has dedicated her career to the development of the visitor economy in metro and regional areas. Industry peers have recognized her work both nationally and internationally.*



## Robyn Willis Inglis

*Robyn has been a dedicated professional in travel, tourism, and hospitality since the 1970s, with a strong emphasis on industry education through roles at Travelscene American Express, Helloworld, AFTA (now ATIA), and the Australian Travel Careers Council. Her honorary roles include being a member of the Australian Travel Training Review Panel, a founding committee member of the Travel Industry Careers Association, and involvement with TIME and SKAL Sydney North. With over 10 years as a judge and lead judge for the NSW Tourism Industry Council Awards, Robyn is committed to advancing industry professionalism and enhancing the visitor experience.*



## Sarah McDougall

*Sarah brings a wealth of experience to her role as a judge for the NSW Tourism Awards. Her leadership at Lake George Winery, where she managed a successful multifaceted business and earned national accolades, underscores her expertise in tourism and hospitality. Additionally, her work as a Marketing expert, working on many national brands over the past twenty years further enhance her credentials. As a current Board Member for Destination Southern NSW, and Australian Grape Wine, she has played a pivotal role in strategic planning, financial management and community engagement. Sarah's diverse background and dedication to excellence make her an invaluable asset to the judging panel.*





## Sarah Rhodes

*Sarah has worked in the tourism sector since the early 2000s. Initially working for Stamford Hotels and later the South Australian Tourism Commission, in 2014 she activated her vision of a tourism sector that also protects people and planet. She's the founder of Plastic Free Southeast Asia, a sustainability consultancy that helps tourism businesses bring their team on the sustainability journey. Sarah holds a Masters Degree in Tourism Management, is an independent Blue Consultant for Oceanic Global's Blue Standard, helping hotels become more sustainable and she's a verified coach for the Travelife Certification program. She's also very proud to call Sydney home and loves exploring her adopted home state of NSW.*



## Steve Hinks

*Steve, Director of Taronga Western Plains Zoo, brings over 20 years of tourism industry experience. His previous roles include Regional General Manager at BridgeClimb Sydney and Merlin Entertainments, overseeing Sydney attractions like Wild Life Sydney Zoo and Sydney Tower Eye. With a Master of Business Management from Charles Sturt University, Steve transitioned to Regional NSW to lead the region's top tourist attraction. He also serves on the Board of Regional Development Australia – Orana and the Dubbo Business Chamber. Steve is committed to enhancing the local tourism industry and promoting the beauty of Regional NSW through collaboration with operators and stakeholders.*



## Wayne Abrahams

*Wayne has dedicated his entire career to the hospitality industry, holding qualifications in Commercial Cookery, Economics, Food & Beverage Management, and Teaching. His extensive experience includes roles as an Executive Chef, National Operations Food & Beverage Manager for a 38-property hotel chain, and overseeing food and beverage operations at Sydney University. Wayne has also worked as a liquor licensee, managed HACCP operations for major providers, and designed commercial kitchens and bars. He was honored with the Catering Executive of the Year award from the Catering Institute of Australia, reflecting his expertise and contributions to the industry.*





# NSW

# T O U R I S M A W A R D S

*Recognising Excellence in the Visitor Economy*

## CONTACT INFORMATION



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