



Some of Natural Habitats' staff at the 2021 Landscapes of Distinction awards ceremony

# AIMING FOR DISTINCTION

The Landscapes of Distinction Awards have once again opened for entries, meaning this month is a great time to nominate recent projects and see how they stack up

RML NEWS

The last Landscapes of Distinction Awards, presented in March, saw around 100 medals presented to the country's best landscapers. Medals will again be presented in August 2022 for the best residential, commercial and revegetation works across more than 18 categories:

- Landscape construction.
- Landscape design.
- Landscape horticulture.
- Garden maintenance / management.
- Revegetation.

There are plenty of opportunities for projects large and small to be recognised, with the forthcoming awards set up to showcase outstanding landscaping ranging from budgets under \$50,000 to \$250,000 and beyond. Businesses can enter one or multiple entries into as many categories as they choose. Each award is independently judged by leading landscape industry

practitioners. RML CEO Janine Scott said a thrilling level of interest in 2020 saw 90 entries received – up 50% on the previous awards year. Scott said she hopes the 2022 awards will dwarf the previous year and set new levels of excellence.

## REASONS TO ENTER

Natural Habitats' 'chief rake' Brian Spencer – more formally known as GM operations – says his business enters regularly "as part of being actively involved with our peers and demonstrating the importance of landscaping within the greater construction industry".

Recognising what staff and clients have achieved is another reason to enter, Spencer says.

"Residential entries are a second chance to celebrate the completion of a project with homeowners and recognise the value of what's been created, while commercial entries are an opportunity to reward staff who have taken part – uplift them and acknowledge them for their hard work."

Spencer hopes the number of entrants this year will pip 100. Spencer also encourages landscapers to think about potential entrants for the Young Landscaper of the Year competition in 2022, so staff can benchmark their abilities and grow from learning about other landscapers' regional projects.

**RESIDENTIAL ENTRIES ARE A SECOND CHANCE TO CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION OF A PROJECT WITH HOMEOWNERS AND RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF WHAT'S BEEN CREATED.**

Humphreys Landscaping was Supreme Winner of the 2020 Awards, presented in March 2021. At the event, Humphreys won Best Construction Project \$150K+, Best Landscape Design Project, Best Horticultural Project and Best Garden Maintenance/Management (400m<sup>2</sup>) in recognition of impressive and extensive work on a challenging sloped Herne Bay home.

Director Scott Humphreys says one of the best reasons for any business to enter the new round of awards is rewarding landscaping staff with accolades and attention, but admits the clients are pretty happy about it too.

"Those who are willing to have properties in awards are enthusiastic; if their property gets an award, they love it. Staff love seeing the clients being happy, so it's a two-way thing.

"Second to that, it's good for your profile from a marketing point of view. It's good for future clients to see you being the best you can be."

Many benefits come from awards entries. With Humphreys Landscapes' premier award-winning entry, for example, photographs of the Herne Bay home look stunning on the company's website, the medal wins provide quality assurance for potential clients, and receiving the awards is an opportunity to communicate with clients.

Humphreys offers helpful advice for this year's entrants:

- Take good photos.
- Be thorough about the entry.
- Make sure the property is well-presented.

"For entries in the residential category, it's good to showcase a longer-established garden than a brand new one," Humphreys adds. "With commercial, you can get away with newer project revegetation, but mature plants look better." ■



Humphreys Landscaping was the 2020 Supreme Winner for this sloping Herne Bay garden

## KEEN TO ENTER?

The criteria for the 2022 Landscapes of Distinction Awards is still under review by Registered Master Landscapers (RML), but all will be revealed before entries open in October.

However, what is known is that the 2022 Awards will include a dedicated design category for students. This new category reflects RML's commitment to supporting emerging talent and shining light on different career paths within the sector.

To support emerging businesses and new entrants, RML is also looking at ways to increase support for entrants preparing their entries. This will be done through RML meet-ups around the country, where those interested in entering will have the opportunity to meet with the RML Awards Team to ask questions and receive feedback on the process.

RML is also exploring other opportunities to connect, such as a Q and A webinar, where entrants can ask questions and judges will offer insights on what they are looking for.

Those looking to enter will have plenty of time to prepare award-winning entries – applications will be open from November until April, so start thinking about projects you could enter now! ■



Registered Master Landscapers is committed to supporting landscape professionals and young future leaders.

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