

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?

KATE HILLIER

A MEMBER OF the famous Hillier family, Kate was the former general manager of New Zealand's Ellerslie International Flower Show until it closed following the earthquake in Christchurch. She is now the event director for a new flower show in Auckland, which is launching in November.

What is the background to the new New Zealand Flower & Garden Show?

The last national flower show in New Zealand took place in 2013 in Christchurch, which was devastated by the earthquake, and there has been nothing in Auckland since 2007. The new show will be held at Bastion Point, a beautiful coastal area overlooking the Waitemata Harbour and home of the Maori tribe Ngati Whatua. In the late 1970s, after a bitter struggle with the government of the time, this land ('Takaparawhau' in Maori) was returned to the Maori people and the Ngati Whatua are excited to be hosting the show here, as they can see that it will create a new history for the area.

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What are the design highlights for 2016?

New Zealand has a very strong pedigree in garden design and this show will give our top talent an opportunity to demonstrate their skills. But each year I would also like to include at least one prominent international garden. This year, that garden is being created by South African designer Leon Kluge, who won Best in Show at Philadelphia in 2015 and has also exhibited at the Chelsea Flower Show.

Will any UK designers be at the inaugural Show?

Andy Sturgeon FSGD will be our Convenor of Judges for the inaugural show. He held this role at Ellerslie, so there is some continuity, plus he is really empathic and supportive of our designers, while still holding them up to the rigours of an extremely professional judging process.

What are your plans for the future of the show?

The first few years are about cementing the show in its new venue with a new format. However, in



Kate Hillier at the Flower & Garden Show site at Bastion Point

the future we will be looking to expand the show – the venue has plenty of room to grow – and using it as a tool to encourage international visitors to our wonderful country.

The New Zealand Flower & Garden Show runs from 23-27 November 2016. If you are interested in participating in the show this year or next, contact Kate via the website www.nzfgs.co.nz