

National palliative care steering group member biographies, March 2025

Name	Short Description	Location
Dr Amanda Landers	<p>Dr Amanda Landers was born in the Waikato and raised in a small town on a horse farm. She attended University of Otago and completed a degree in Medical Laboratory Science and Medicine. Amanda developed a passion for palliative care in her junior years, and across her career she has worked in large urban areas and extremely remote environments in both Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. She enjoys talking with patients and families facing life-limiting illness, helping them to plan and prepare for the future and ensuring symptoms are well-managed.</p> <p>In 2023, Amanda completed her PhD investigating end-stage chronic lung disease and their health care network, with the long-term goal of evaluating a co-designed model of care. Amanda also leads the Aotearoa Australian Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy Research (ASPRT) Group who strive towards best practice for those with pancreatic cancer in Australasia.</p> <p>Dr Amanda Landers is now Head of Department of Medicine at the Otago Medical School in Christchurch.</p>	Christchurch
Dr Emily Chang	<p>Dr Emily Chang is a 2nd generation Taiwanese New Zealander, born and raised in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland. She is dual trained in General Paediatrics and Palliative Care and is the paediatric palliative care specialist at Starship Children’s Health, Auckland City Hospital.</p> <p>Emily has an interest in adolescents and young adults with palliative care needs and is a founding member of the Auckland Palliative Care Transition Network, an interdisciplinary collaboration between paediatric palliative care, hospice, hospital palliative care and primary care. Her ethnic background and experiences of death and dying in the Chinese community has given her an interest in cultural influences on communication, death and dying.</p> <p>She has presented at and being on the organising committees of international palliative care conferences, featured on a Doctors NOS podcast, and is the current Paediatric representative on the Royal Australasian College of Physicians Chapter of Palliative Medicine Committee.</p>	Auckland

Emma Hedgecock	<p>Emma is an experienced nurse across primary and tertiary healthcare settings, working primarily within Oncology and Palliative Care specialty services. She has worked for Hospice West Auckland Community Team and Waitematā DHB Hospital Palliative care team, developing and establishing supportive care/early palliative care clinic, also completing a Masters in Health Science and publishing several articles focusing on patient reported outcome measurement in palliative care.</p> <p>Emma is based in rural Waikato and has recently worked as a Mātanga Tapuhi/Nurse Practitioner in Residential Aged Care. She is now based in Primary Care, where she is still involved in providing services to local Residential Aged Care facilities. Emma carries a commitment to Te Tiriti principles and brings governance experience with Palliative Care Nurses New Zealand (previously) and Nurse Practitioners New Zealand (current).</p>	Paeroa
Evelyn Gerrish	<p>Evelyn grew up in the Bay of Plenty. Following completion of her medical degree through Otago University and junior doctor years in Wellington she returned home to the Bay of Plenty. Initially training and working for a decade in general practice, with part time work as a medical officer at Waipuna hospice. This led to a decision to leave general practice and complete specialist palliative care training. Since completing her training, she has worked in the hospital palliative care team supporting Tauranga and Whakatane Hospitals as well as on call for the Waikato region. Working in different hospitals, communities and varied access to palliative care services has highlighted the inequalities in health and given Evelyn a passion for service improvement to ensure equitable access to quality palliative care.</p> <p>She has been involved in improvement projects and developing new services in the hospital and the community during this time. More recently she has joined and now chairs the Hospital Palliative Care NZ committee. In 2024 she was on the Adult Models of Care Working Group.</p>	
Fraser Watson	<p>Fraser is the Specialist Clinical Lead Extended Care Paramedic for Hato Hone St John and has a 30-year paramedic career with many roles, initially based in the Horowhenua. He has a Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine, Graduate Certificate in Emergency Management, Post Graduate Certificate in Advanced Resuscitation and Master of Philosophy with first class honours. He has increasingly focused on community models of paramedic care and has a particular interest in palliative care. He has partnered with traditional palliative care providers to develop clinical guidance and initiatives to support paramedics delivering palliative care in the community.</p>	Kumara

	A member of the Australasian Palliative Paramedicine Advisory Group and several Australasian College of Paramedicine committees, Fraser also sits on the Te Kaunihera Manapou Paramedic Council Professional Conduct Committee. Fraser lives in Kumara, on the West Coast.	
Georgina Johnson	<p>Ko Hikurangi te maunga, ko Waiapu te awa, ko Ngati Porou te iwi. Ko Georgina Johnson toku ingoa. No Te Tairawhiti ahau. Georgie is currently with Tairawhiti Toitu Te Ora Iwi Maori Partnership Board has a degree in business and not-for-profit management and brings significant governance experience across whanau, hapu, NGOs, and government. Her whakapapa connects to Ngati Porou, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Mutunga ki Wharekauri, Waikato-Tainui, Tūwharetoa, Maniapoto.</p> <p>A serving Justice of the Peace, Georgie is a passionate advocate for better health outcomes with a particular focus on Māori, currently advising in roles on the Te Whatu Ora Data & Digital Whanau, Consumer and Clinician Council, Medicines Management Digital Services Group, National Palliative Steering Group, SCENZ Group Member, RANZCOG He Hono Wahine, Pharmac Consumer Advisory Committee, and the Fire and Emergency Tairawhiti Maori Advisory Group & Local Advisory Committee as the Chair. She has worked previously as Project Manager for Te Whatu Ora Tairawhiti within Tui Te Ora Long Term Conditions and Digi Hauora (Telehealth projects). In her spare time volunteers with Coastguard Tairawhiti.</p>	Gisborne
Kim Fuller	<p>Kim is the Clinical Nurse Consultant for IDEA Services/IHC on the organisation's National Clinical team. She has more than 30 years of experience working in a variety of settings and for a variety of organisations both in New Zealand and overseas.</p> <p>Kim leads a Community of Practice for IDEA Services, with a focus on increasing health literacy for staff and improving wellbeing for people who access services from IHC. She is passionate about advocating for people who live with intellectual and learning disabilities to have the same opportunities as everyone else and to have equitable access to health services.</p> <p>Kim lives in semi-rural Northland on the Tutukaka coast. Her mother's family are from Hikurangi, Northland via Nova Scotia and her father's family are from Scotland via the Hawkes Bay.</p>	Whangarei
Margaret Tuala	Margaret Tuala is a palliative care nurse, originally from Leauva'a - Samoa. Coming to Wellington for education as a teenager, Margaret graduated from Massey University with a Bachelor of Nursing degree in 2006 before moving to South Auckland to work at Middlemore Hospital.	South Auckland

	<p>Since then, she has completed a Post Graduate Certificate, Diploma and Masters of Practice (Leadership) from Whitireia Polytechnic Wellington, focused on Pacific Health, and has worked as a registered nurse in Residential Aged Care, adult rehabilitation, acute orthopaedics, acute combined surgery, and Charge Nurse Manager in acute respiratory and now as a Palliative Care Clinical Speciality Nurse since 2019.</p> <p>Working as a Charge Nurse Manager in a Respiratory ward she experienced and observed the many challenges and barriers for Pasefika patients/family to accept and access palliative care services within the hospital and especially in the transition to home for end-of-life care. She is passionate about making a difference in equitable care delivery for minority groups and she considers it a privilege to provide education to non-Pasefika health care colleagues in hospital and community from her Pacific worldview perspective. This passion for education extends to helping her Pasefika community (church based) to promote, enhance understanding and awareness of how valuable palliative/hospice care services are for patients and family which helps with increased uptake/access of palliative care services.</p>	
Dr Mike Loten	<p>Dr Michael (Mike) Loten is a Specialist General Practitioner with over 30 years of experience in primary care, with the last 18 years being in rural primary care.</p> <p>He is passionate about delivering palliative care to tāngata whaiora (people seeking health) in their own homes, using a team-based approach to provide quality care. This approach includes close collaboration with district nurses, practice nurses, and palliative care teams. Mike also emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships with whānau (family) and those supporting tāngata whaiora, ensuring that care is holistic and culturally appropriate.</p> <p>Mike lives in Raglan with his family, where he is the co-owner of Raglan Medical. The clinic serves 6,100 tāngata whaiora and is committed to providing extended care services to the local community. The team at Raglan Medical includes doctors, nurses, kaiāwhina (community support workers), clinical pharmacists, health improvement practitioners and administrative staff. The clinic also runs free integrated marae clinics in the more remote areas of their catchment area.</p> <p>He has governance experience as a clinic owner and through his roles on the Pinnacle Rural Regional Alliance Group, Chairperson of the West Coast Health Charitable Trust (responsible for running PRIME services in the Whaingaroa area) and previous positions on the National Rural Unplanned Care Committee in 2024 and the Extended Primary Care/POAC Committee at Waikato DHB from 2019 – 2024.</p>	Raglan
Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell	<p>Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell (Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki & Ngāti Porou) is a Senior Research Fellow and co-director of the Te Ārai Palliative Care and End of Life Research Group at the School of Nursing, University of Auckland. Tess leads</p>	Rotorua

	<p>Kaupapa Māori Research (KMR) projects on behalf of the Te Ārai Kāhui Kaumātua to improve the end of life for kaumātua and their whānau caregivers. Tess and her team created the first dedicated Māori palliative care and end of life website to support whānau caregivers and New Zealand health professionals: www.teipuaronui.co.nz</p> <p>In 2022, The Royal Society of NZ awarded Tess and the Te Ārai team the NZ Health Research Council's Te Tohu Rapuora Medal for research excellence with Māori communities. Tess has been selected as one of New Zealand's 100 Māori Leaders as part of the Henry Rongomau Bennett Foundation Leadership Strategy based on her contributions to Indigenous end of life care research: 100maorileaders.com</p>	
Vanessa Eldridge	<p>Vanessa is Director of Pō Pīata Limited an agency specialising in Palliative Care and end of life care for Māori including cultural supervision, facilitation and boutique programme development. Vanessa links with Primary Care through governance roles at PHO and Trustee with Hora Te Pai Health in Paraparaumu. She maintains national links through the Te Whatu Ora Palliative Care Steering Group and Te Roopū Taki Māori with Hospice NZ. She Chairs Te Pou Tautoko for Mary Potter Hospice where she held various roles for 13 years.</p> <p>Pō Pīata's strengths lie in innovation, working with community, and the development of strong networks. Vanesa is strategic and has developed a range of programmes, frameworks and educational experiences that have been implemented locally and shared internationally. These have informed national research and policy. Vanessa is of Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine and Rongowhakaata descent.</p>	Wellington
Verbena Harawira	<p>Iwi: Ngāti Awa (Whakatāne) me Ngai Te Rangi (Tauranga). Verbena was born and raised in Whakatāne where she still lives and works. She has been widowed twice, with five adult children and four mokopuna.</p> <p>Verbena has worked in the Secondary School space as a Teacher and also in the Tertiary space at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi as Senior Administrator in the School of Indigenous Graduate Studies.</p> <p>She resigned this role in December 2021 to care for her husband. six months later he passed away in July 2022. He spent the last six weeks of his life in Whakatāne Hospital.</p> <p>She comes with no formal health background, but her interest in joining this roopu was to bring a whānau and community perspective, having been in the palliative care space and working with Hospice for other whanau members both in the Hospital environment as well as in the home.</p>	Whakatāne

	Currently Verbena's place of mahi is Eastern Bay Primary Health Alliance (Whakatāne) where she is Rautaki Māori (Strategy and Networking). She ensures cultural safety in the organisational environment and in initiating engagement with organisations and communities outside the organisation.	
Dr Warrick Jones	<p>Warrick is a Palliative Care Specialist with deep roots in Te Tai Tokerau, as he was born and educated in Kaitia. During his undergraduate years in Otago, his father died in a motor vehicle accident, an event that has significantly shaped his view on the use of medical knowledge and skill. While completing his FRNZCGP in Invercargill, he worked at Hospice Southland, initially as a Medical Officer, then as Medical Director, eventually moving into the newly established Northland Palliative Medicine Specialist role in 2003.</p> <p>Warrick has worked alongside Primary Care, Age Residential Care facilities and hospital teams in order to increase their capacity and ability to care for the dying. He and the Northland Hospice team led the development and use of PalCare, a web-based patient management system that allows everyone involved in the care of a patient to have access to and participate in their care information.</p> <p>Over the years Warrick has been involved in numerous national committees and working, all with the purpose of making patients and family central to their care choices at the end of life.</p>	Whangarei
Wayne Naylor	<p>Wayne grew up on the West Coast of the South Island before training as a Registered Nurse in Dunedin and then working in Auckland, Wellington, and Hamilton, as well as London. He has spent most of his 30-year nursing career working in oncology, haematology, and palliative care, with some time also spent in general surgery, plastics and burns, and forensic psychiatry.</p> <p>In August 2022, Wayne was appointed Chief Executive of Hospice New Zealand, after joining Hospice NZ as Clinical Programmes Manager in January 2021. Prior to joining Hospice NZ, Wayne was Director of Nursing at Hospice Waikato, and before that spent 3 years as Senior Analyst for the Palliative Care Council of NZ where he undertook the first national study into palliative care need in New Zealand. Along with his Nursing Diploma from Otago Polytechnic, Wayne completed a Bachelor of Science honours degree at The Royal Marsden NHS Trust in London in 2000, and after returning to New Zealand undertook post graduate qualifications in palliative care and statistics.</p>	Wellington