

## Judge Panel of The GreatTalk National Speech Contest 2025

**Meredith Caisley**

*Preliminary Round Judge*



M. Mgt, BA, FSB, FTCL, FSCA,  
ANZIM, CLTA, Dip.Bus.Admin, Dip  
ATE.

Meredith has been Principal Consultant of her own Speech Communication Consultancy for over 50 years. She has just retired from being a Registered Speech Teacher formerly lecturing at the Auckland University of Technology where she specialised in Business Communication. For 12 years, she

tutored at Auckland University running advanced speaking courses for migrants employed in Auckland needing to refine their pronunciation skills and gain greater confidence in speaking English in New Zealand business. Meredith offered voice and presentational speaking training to individuals wishing to gain employment or advance their career prospects. She is a fellow of Trinity College, London, a fellow of Speech New Zealand, formerly a trustee of Speech New Zealand and a national speech examiner.

When Meredith established her Consultancy, she worked with students from the age of four years as that is when language skills become so evident. Throughout her lifetime, she has specialised in the development of these skills throughout a child's development into adulthood. Meredith is now enjoying fresh activities in her first year of retirement.

## Jessie Xinxiao Wu

### *Preliminary & Final Round Judge*

Jessie has over 18 years of experience in both New Zealand and international media as a TV presenter and producer. Once considered one of Auckland's most powerful presenters, she transitioned into education a decade ago and has since become a passionate and inspiring public speaking coach.



She is the founder of CubeeKiz Speech & Journalism School, where she developed a unique bilingual teaching system tailored to students growing up in multilingual environments. What sets Jessie apart is her ability to bridge classroom learning with real-world opportunities. She believes language should not only be taught, it should be lived. Through hands-on experiences, she helps students apply what they learn, using communication to build confidence, leadership, and long-term success. Her students have earned national and international awards and scholarships, and many have become sought-after speakers and media hosts across New Zealand. Jessie is also the visionary behind The GreatTalk Speech and Debate Competition, leading top students to the New Zealand Parliament to have their voices heard by MPs and Ministers.

She is a certified teacher with Speech NZ and a frequent judge at major competitions. Her professionalism and dedication have earned her the deep trust of students and parents alike. In addition, she is the director and producer of the New Zealand International Children's Gala, supporting the Starship Foundation and Radio Lollipop.

Jessie also serves as a Zero Waste Advisor for Auckland Council, promoting sustainability through events.

## Liv Costello

### *Preliminary & Final Round Judge*



Liv Costello has been teaching public speaking and performance skills since earning her Speech NZ Associate Teaching Diploma in 2021. She is currently in her final semester of a Bachelor of Communication at the University of Auckland. Liv teaches private speech at both Saint Kentigern Boys' School and Saint Kentigern Girls' School and also tutors a range of private pupils across all ages. Well-versed in the judging process, she has served on multiple REHU TAI speech competition panels. In addition to teaching, Liv is a working actor with credits in both theatre and television, including Shortland

Street. She believes public speaking is an invaluable skill and is thrilled to be part of the National GreatTalk judging panel, celebrating some of New Zealand's most talented young speakers.

## Nancy Lu

### *Final Round Judge*



- ✧ New Zealand Member of Parliament
- ✧ Deputy Chair Regulations Review Committee
- ✧ Committee member of Finance and Expenditure
- ✧ Master in Public Administrator (Mid-Career) of Harvard Kennedy School
- ✧ Former Lead Advisor Financial Strategy at Auckland Council

Nancy Lu is a trilingual individual fluent in English, Mandarin, and Cantonese, both in native contexts and professionally. She possesses a proactive approach to learning and thrives on collaborative endeavors, seamlessly integrating into diverse teams to accomplish shared objectives. Whether navigating university studies or professional endeavors, she is dedicated to assuming ownership of her tasks with independence and motivation. Nancy's bicultural background uniquely equips her to adeptly engage with clients from both Western and Eastern cultural backgrounds, leveraging this perspective to achieve optimal outcomes.

Nancy has long championed the empowerment of young people, encouraging them to speak up, get involved in politics, and participate actively in our democracy. Her work continues to inspire the next generation to engage in civic life and shape a better future.

**Glenda Pearce**  
*Final Round Judge*

M.Ed (First class Hons), LTCL (Distinction), BA ATCL, Dip Tchg, Dip. And TESOL accredited adjudicator.

Glenda Pearce is the director of an extensive speech and drama practice in Auckland - teaching students and adults in communication arts, public speaking and dramatic arts. Early in her career, she directed many school and community productions and was Head of Faculty in English and Drama in two schools. She was also employed for a decade by the Ministry of Education and NZQA in teacher education and NCEA English assessment. She is a writer of play scripts, articles and speeches. Published articles include “Assessing Creativity”, “Motivation”, and “Presenting Poetry Forms”.



Glenda is a Speech NZ examiner and an accredited adjudicator for performing arts festivals and theatre (Theatre Fed). She is currently a NAPTA judge. She is active in community theatre, directing and acting, and working behind the scenes. She directed BLACK COFFEE (Agatha Christie) in 2024, which won the ACTT Award for Outstanding Drama. She also works as an international reviewer for Broadwayworld.com and Playshakespeare.com

Glenda has facilitated workshops throughout the country for community theatre groups, in universities and at conferences in English, Drama and Gifted and Talented Education. She has been the recipient of several national awards and scholarships within education and drama, including winning Best Actress and Best Play for Theatre Fest, a Rotary Business and Professional Women’s Scholarship to the USA, a Massey University Study Award for scholarship in her Masters studies, and Deirdre Snedden Scholarships to France in 2013, and to study Shakespeare acting and directing at the Globe, London in 2018. Glenda is passionate about developing confident, expressive and artistic voices. This is an invaluable asset in our modern world.



**Melissa Chan-Green**

***Final Round Judge***



Melissa Chan-Green (nee Melissa Davies) has been a broadcast journalist for more than 2 decades and was most recently Co-Host of AM on TV3. An award-winning journalist, Melissa has covered defining global moments, from conflict zones to the Olympic Games, royal weddings, and the funerals of Queen Elizabeth and Nelson Mandela. Her work has earned her a prestigious Voyager Award for Best Coverage of a Major News Event. Beyond journalism, Melissa is passionate about fostering literacy and education, particularly among young people.

As a proud mum of two, she dedicates time to inspiring a love of reading and writing in the next generation.

With an interest in projects that value community, connection and education - she is working on research with those priorities at the core.

That includes a research project on the Chinese Anzacs and the School Shorts podcast. A podcast to help lift literacy by arming parents with information about the work that is going on in classrooms and practical tips for how they can best support at home.

Melissa is an experienced MC and offers communication advice for organisations that share her interest in community engagement.