

PROFILE

I build living systems for people and ideas: a community of more than 1,000 curious people across 35 countries, an independent press, and the shape and strategy of organisations finding their next form. My practice is accompaniment, for people, founders and organisations at a threshold, where the work is less about adding something new than making what is already there legible and sustainable.

Before founding Grokkist I spent a decade leading research systems, policy and performance inside universities in Australia and New Zealand. I came to the work through graphic design, social science and public policy, so I hold the poetry and the plumbing at once.

CURRENT WORK

Founder and Lead Groksmith, Grokkist

GROKK.IST · AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND · 2022 – NOW

- Grew the Network to more than 1,000 people across 35+ countries, with gatherings, affinity groups and member-run rooms.
- Founded Grokkist Press as editor at large: four books published, authors keep their rights and 70% of net receipts.
- Designed it as an ecosystem of flywheels: free material and open rooms, live company, publishing, and a practitioner path.
- Run as a limited company on a social enterprise model, with the name protected by international trademark registration.

Senior Institutional Advisor, Center for Non-Religious Spirituality and Existential Health

RETAINED ADVISORY · 2025 – NOW

- Weekly founder partnership with Jim Palmer, helping a founder-led project grow into a sturdier organisation.
- Community and membership strategy, and the brand architecture that holds the Center and Jim's existential health work as one body of work.
- Led a full platform migration, a new front door and the practitioner training; published Jim's *The Practice of Being Alive*, a #1 new release in Existential Philosophy.

Strategic Advisor, Future Self Now

LEAD GROKSMITH TO THERESA SANSOME · UNITED KINGDOM · 2025 – NOW

- Helping a twenty-five-year practice cohere into one journey and catalysing its next stage, from strategy and community to a new front door and publishing.

Strategic Advisor, Institute for Practical ekoPhilosophy

IPEP · 2025 – NOW

- Led *Rewilding the Institute*, shaping its story, ecosystem and scaffolding towards something legible and fundable; now an ongoing peer advisory.

IN A SENTENCE

“Danu’s presence was immediately transformative.”

Prof John Raine, former PVC
Research & Innovation, AUT

TALKS AND WORKSHOPS

The work that brings you alive hasn’t learned to pay you, yet

Association of Sustainability Practitioners · 2026

Coddiwomple Design

Online Facilitation
Unconference · 2025

Shaping the Future with Curiosity and Care

Canadian Association for the Club of Rome · 2025

The Future of Education & Technology

Panellist · Quantic School of Business and Technology · 2022

WAYS OF WORKING

Founder and organisational accompaniment

Strategy, ecosystem and institutional design

Community and platform architecture

Developmental editing and publishing

Facilitation and learning design

Research systems, policy and reporting

RECOGNITION

Vice-Chancellor’s Professional Excellence Award

AUT · finalist 2017, nominee 2019

EARLIER CAREER

Product Specialist, Asia-Pacific

DIGITAL SCIENCE · 2020 – 2021

- Specialist in Dimensions and Altmetric for academic and government clients, supporting 20 sales and account managers from demo to implementation.
- Opened the first academic clients in Singapore (NTU) and Korea (KAST); kept churn in Australia and New Zealand under 3% through the pandemic.

Manager, Research Systems and Performance

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY · 2017 – 2020

- Led the university's 2018 national research evaluation (PBRF), worth \$75m, with a 30-person team and 750+ academics. Research-active staff rose 62% and funding 50%.
- Improved the processes, systems and policies behind the research information and performance framework.
- Led 2 direct and 7 indirect reports across ICT, Library and faculties; reported to the PVC Research.

Project Manager, Research Policy and Reporting

BOND UNIVERSITY · GOLD COAST · 2015 – 2017

- Looked after research policy and reporting, and led the review and replacement of the core research management systems end to end, from business case and tender to implementation.

Teaching and Research Assistant

RMIT UNIVERSITY · MELBOURNE · 2009 – 2015

- Taught undergraduate public policy, research methods, political economy and intercultural communication.
- Research assistant to Prof Rob Watts on an ARC Linkage project auditing Victoria's human rights charter.

Policy and Research Assistant

LAND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY · SINGAPORE · 2013

- Data analysis, policy evaluation and report writing for the Travel Smart pilot, easing peak-hour crowding on public transport.

Genius Administrator

APPLE STORE CHADSTONE · MELBOURNE · 2010 – 2011

- Ran inventory and supervised service and repairs at a high-volume store.

Business Development Manager

ROBINA VARSITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE · GOLD COAST · 2007 – 2008

- Business development for the chamber serving Robina and Varsity Lakes.

Managing Director

SENSE CREATIVE AND X-SPOT MAC CONSULTING · GOLD COAST · 2004 – 2007

- Founded and ran two businesses with seven staff: design, branding and video production, and training and consulting on Apple platforms.

ALSO

Practising member, Association of Sustainability Practitioners. Australian, based in Aotearoa New Zealand. Referees available on request.

EDUCATION

Executive MBA

Quantic School of Business and Technology · 2022

BA (Honours), International Studies

RMIT University · 2014

MA Social Science (Public Policy)

RMIT University · 2013

CERTIFICATIONS

Emotional Leadership Practitioner · Emotional Culture Deck · 2024

Behind the B · B Lab Aotearoa New Zealand · 2024

Science of Self · TTI Success Insights · 2022

Aspire Leader Development Program · Leader's Edge · 2018

Six Sigma Tools and Principles · University System of Georgia · 2017

Project Management Principles and Practices · UC Irvine · 2015

WRITING AND MAKING

"Curiosity"

in *Community Starts with C*, ed. Grace Chen
Book chapter · 2024

The Digital Migrant

A guide to computers for the curious and confused
Book · 2009

Opinion and reviews

ABC; Australian Stage
2010 – 2013

Still Curious

Podcast, 39 episodes
2021 – 2024

Deferred Action

Interactive fiction, original concept
2024

Legible and Grokkistry in Motion

Concept albums
2025 – 2026