

Emerging Tourism Leader Award

The Emerging Tourism Leader Award is an individual award that recognises an outstanding tourism professional who has been in the tourism industry workforce for less than 10 years (you commenced work in a tourism role (internationally or domestically) in or after 2016).

What are the judges looking for?

- **Tourism career** – You have embraced your role/s, are progressing and upskilling and adding value to your employer/business.
- **Achievements** – You have a record of notable achievements which have contributed to business success and fostering continuous improvements, particularly over the past 12-24 months.
- **Contribution to the wider industry** – You clearly understand the value of tourism and are proactively contributing to the industry's success.
- **Personal** – You have a strong ethos and values, the right attitude and the leadership qualities necessary to be an outstanding tourism leader.

Eligibility

- This award is open to individual participants only. Entries must be submitted for one person, and joint or group submissions will not be accepted.
- An entrant can enter themselves, an employee or be nominated.
- All Individual Award category entries must include two referees:
 1. From current employer/organisation.
 2. Someone outside of the place of employment.
- Entrants must be actively employed in the New Zealand tourism industry at the time of the New Zealand Tourism Awards winner announcement.

Judging criteria

Your entry should include the following and must be submitted using the online portal.

Entries will be assessed against the following criteria:

Your tourism industry career statement* (150 words)

A short statement about your tourism industry career to date and why you should win this award.

Award statements

Award statements should concisely outline how you have demonstrated the criteria for this award, in each of the areas below:

1. Tourism career (up to 150 words plus CV) – 15 points

- Include key roles you have held (please attach a CV – two pages max)
- What are your current roles and responsibilities?
- What significant training and professional development have you undertaken and what skills have you gained? How have these added value to the business?

2. Achievements (up to 350 words) – 35 points

- What are the key achievements in the tourism industry roles you have held, and how have these achievements contributed to the tourism organisations you have worked in?
- What projects have you undertaken and how these have contributed to business development/growth?
- How do you foster continuous improvement?
- What successful innovations or initiatives can be attributed to you or your involvement?

3. Contribution to the wider industry (up to 350 words) – 35 points

- What have you done to champion your sector and the wider tourism industry within your region/nationally?
- What do you do within your role to contribute to the wider tourism industry? Please include industry organisations you belong to and roles you've held within these organisations.
- Outside of your role, outline your contribution to the wider industry.
- Have you attended and participated in any industry events?
- How are you using and promoting the Tiaki Promise?
- How are you championing the New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment?
- What are you doing within your organisation to measure and reduce your carbon emissions?
- What actions are you taking to support Predator Free 2050 or champion biodiversity and conservation efforts?
- How are you embracing Te Whakarae Māori (Māori approaches and knowledge) within your organisation or visitor experience? What you have you done to foster the next generation of tourism leaders?

4. Personal (up to 150 words) – 15 points

- Why are you pursuing a career in tourism?
- How are you evolving as a tourism industry leader?
- How are you viewed – by your peers, your staff, managers? Include at least one reference from a work colleague/manager/director in your supporting evidence.

Compliance Statement

As part of the submission process, you will be asked to confirm that:

- The entrant (individual or organisation) is not under investigation or been prosecuted by any New Zealand or international statutory body.
- All the information provided in your application is true and verified where possible.

This will be a tick box in the submission form.

* This information may be used in TIA and Award partners in marketing material.



Supporting material

While not mandatory, we strongly encourage all entrants to submit supporting material, as it provides valuable context for the judges and can strengthen your entry. However, it must clearly relate to the relevant question and written response. All information required for judging must be included within the designated answer fields. Supporting material is supplementary and will not be assessed as a standalone component.

Supporting material should be a single document in PDF format of no more than 10 pages and a max of 2MB. You may include graphs, screenshots, testimonials or a link to video content (no more than three minutes video footage in total). Documents exceeding 10 pages will not be considered.

Use of AI tools

Applicants may use AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Copilot etc) to assist with drafting and support the preparation of their submission. However, all content must be factually accurate, reflect the applicant's genuine work and achievements, and be verifiable by the applicant.

AI must not be used to fabricate data, outcomes, testimonials, or experiences. The applicant remains fully responsible for the integrity of their submission.

Referee

You will be asked to provide the name of a referee, including their contact email and phone number. If you are selected as a finalist, your referee may be contacted by a member of the judging panel.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the awards or the entry and submission process, please contact events@tia.org.nz.

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2026 Entry Terms and Conditions

- You must complete an online entry form for each of the awards you wish to enter.
- **Entry Fees:** An entry fee is applicable for each award category (excluding the Sir Jack Newman Award). The entry fee is non-refundable.
- Payment by credit card is required at the time of registration. If you'd like to pay by invoice, please email us. Failure to pay the full amount by the required date may result in the entry being removed.
- For individual awards, you can only enter yourself or an employee.
- For business awards, you can only enter your own organisation.
- Entry for the Sir Jack Newman Award is by nomination only and nominations need to be submitted via the awards portal by the awards closing date.
- The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- **Previous Award Winners and Finalists:** Previous winners and finalists are welcome to enter the New Zealand Tourism Awards. The only exception to this is the Toroa ā-uta, -Toroa ā-tai Māori Tourism Award which a three year stand down period applies for the previous year's winners of this award (2023-2025). Previous winners of this award can still enter other categories.
 - For all other categories, if you were a winner or finalist in 2025 and are eligible to enter into the same award category again for 2026, your entry must clearly demonstrate significant improvements or changes compared to your 2025 submission. You will be required to provide this information in a separate text box on your entry form.
- Current employees of Tourism Industry Aotearoa cannot enter the awards.
- All finalists and winners agree to media coverage. All entry information is held on a commercial-in-confidence basis. No entry information will be shared or distributed to third parties (with the exception of the judging panel). Where an award sponsor requests information to promote the finalists or winner in their category, TIA reserves the right to provide them with the organisational statement provided on entry. Entrant's contact details may be provided to the Awards sponsors and Tourism Industry Aotearoa Strategic Partners.
- TIA reserves the right to cancel the Awards programme or individual award categories within the programme.
- TIA reserves the right to remove an entrant or entry for risk of reputational damage or events that occur between entry and awards night that necessitate action by TIA.
- The entrant (individual or organisation) confirms that they are not under investigation nor have been prosecuted by any New Zealand or international statutory body (for example Accident Compensation Corporation, New Zealand Police, Health and Disability Commission, Inland Revenue Department, Immigration, WorkSafe NZ, Commerce Commission or other). If this is to be found untrue, it will result in the entrant being removed from the Award category.
- TIA may choose to conduct their own research from public sources on entrants. This may result in information being provided for judges consideration as part of the judging process.

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