

## Environment Award

The tourism industry must demonstrate leadership in taking action to nurture the natural environment, while minimising its negative impacts on the environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Environment Award recognises an environmentally sustainable tourism business that actively supports and champions environmental initiatives that reduce carbon emissions, minimise waste, and embrace kaitiakitanga – guardianship and protection of our natural, built and cultural resources.

### What are the judges looking for?

- **Leadership** – a clearly defined organisation-wide sustainability programme which has had measurable results and caused a significant impact over a sustained period of time. It should also demonstrate aspirational goals and a plan to achieve these.
- **Operational excellence** – the sustainability programme is well thought out, executed and evaluated across the business.
- **Impact and outcomes** – demonstrable results have been achieved over a sustained period of time (at least 12 months) and the impact is measured.

### New Zealand Tourism Sustainability Commitment

This Award specifically relates to tourism businesses showing leadership across the three business commitments 10, 11 and 12, while also taking action on the other business commitments.

**Commitment 10 – Restoring Nature.** We contribute to protecting and enhancing Aotearoa New Zealand’s environment, including water, biodiversity, landscapes and clean air.

**Commitment 11 – Carbon Reduction.** We act urgently to contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand's transition to a net zero carbon economy.

**Commitment 12 – Eliminating Waste.** We take responsibility for the entire life cycle of products and services we use and ultimately eliminate the waste associated with these.

### Judging criteria

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

#### **Organisation statement\*** (150 words max)

A short statement about your organisation and why you should win this award.

#### **Award statements**

Award statements should concisely outline how the organisation has demonstrated the criteria for this award, for each of the below areas:

**1. Leadership** (up to 300 words) – 30 points

- What are you doing to actively protect, restore and enhance New Zealand's natural environment and biodiversity? How are you working towards helping achieve New Zealand's Predator Free 2050 goal?
- What carbon measurement and reduction programme do you have in place? What steps have you taken to reduce or avoid carbon emissions? When was this introduced and how has it evolved? What are your future plans to further reduce your emissions?
- What waste reduction and management programme do you have in place with the aim of reducing, reusing, recycling and recovering as much as possible, and ultimately eliminating waste?
- Do you have, or are you pursuing, independent verification/certification for your business? If so, please provide details.
- How are staff, your senior leadership team and stakeholders involved in these initiatives? How is staff buy-in achieved?
- Have you inspired any other environmental community or business initiatives beyond your business?

Include (as relevant):

- When did these actions/programmes start and how have they evolved?
- How do you communicate your actions and success – to your staff, community, wider tourism industry or beyond?
- How does your programme support behaviour change of your visitors and community?
- How do you educate and engage your community and visitors about your initiatives?
- How are these actions integrated throughout the business?
- How do your initiatives extend to suppliers?
- What are your future plans and aspirations?

**2. Operational excellence** (up to 350 words) –35 points

- How were your programmes developed and how is the ongoing implementation managed?
- Who was consulted during the development stage?
- Are there documented plans with timelines, KPIs, budget, communications activities?
- Is the programme evaluated and continually improved?
- How are you embracing Te Whakarae Māori (a Māori approach and knowledge) within your organisation and/or visitor experience?
- Is the programme independently audited and based on an international or national standard or certification programme? If so, please provide evidence.
- How do you utilise and promote the Tiaki Promise? What initiatives do you have in place to educate visitors about New Zealand's cultural and behavioural expectations?
- How does the business actively engage with visitors and communities on the importance of restoring, protecting and enhancing New Zealand's natural environment?

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### **3. Impact and outcomes** (up to 350 words) – 35 points

- What are the tangible and quantifiable results and impacts achieved over a sustained period of time (at least 12 months)? Provide before and after metrics where relevant.
- Please use relevant and appropriate data to substantiate any environmental claims made in your submission. Depending on the nature of your business, data could include:
  - Carbon emissions and reductions,
  - Carbon emissions per visitor or by revenue.
  - Amount of waste avoided or diverted from landfill
  - Cumulative amount of rubbish collected in a clean up
  - Number of pests trapped or trees planted
  - Area of native bush protected
- What are the environmental, community, visitor, and economic impacts of these programmes?
- What benefits were achieved beyond what was expected?

### **Financial Performance and Compliance Statement**

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

- Your business is financially sound.
- 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](mailto: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.

If you have any questions, please contact [events@tia.org.nz](mailto:events@tia.org.nz)

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