

Toroa ā-uta, Toroa ā-tai Māori Tourism Award

Ka hoka a toroa ā-uta, ka hoka a toroa ā-tai.	<i>The albatross soars across the seashore, rising above the tides.</i>
He rere ko kowhitiwhiti, he tau ko kowanawana.	<i>Circling significant ocean's crossings, settling upon significant spaces.</i>
He mata nui, he mata wai, he mata moe, me mata popore.	<i>Acknowledging the multiplicity of all encountered. Their identities, realising dreams; always alert.</i>
He wae tapoi ki te whai-ao, he mata tapoi ki te ao-marama.	<i>Visitors in pursuit of light; collectively emerging into the world of enlightenment.</i>
Tihei, mauri ora!	<i>Tihei, mauri ora!</i>

Toroa ā-Uta, Toroa ā-Tai Māori Tourism Award draws inspiration from Professor Tom Roa's karakia reproduced above. This karakia likens the voyage of the Toroa (Albatross) to the visitor's journey, engaging with people and communities across Aotearoa, New Zealand.

In encountering the multiplicity of people across our country, Māori tourism businesses have a distinct role, sharing unique stories of identity and whenua. They guide visitors and support whānau alike to realise their aspirations and those of hapū, iwi and the wider community. Māori tourism is about businesses that are socially and environmentally aware, economically and culturally thriving, creating and contributing to healthy, vibrant communities.

Toroa ā-Uta, Toroa ā-Tai recognises and celebrates tourism businesses that integrate these stories of identity and whenua across their operations, enabling the success of whānau, hapū and iwi as their unique selves. They offer experiences that contribute to the holistic wellbeing of our communities.

Criteria changes for 2026

The Toroa ā-uta, Toroa ā-tai Māori Tourism Award celebrates the breadth and depth of Māori tourism across Aotearoa, the multiplicity of people, place and story that makes our sector so distinctive. In conjunction with New Zealand Māori Tourism, a three-year stand-down period for previous winners has been introduced for 2026 in the spirit of kotahitanga and making space for more voices to rise so that the diversity of our sector can be seen and celebrated. This means that organisations who won this award from 2023-2025 are not eligible to enter this specific category in 2026. This change reflects the underlying values of this award and the karakia it draws from, that Māori tourism is not a single story but many. We look forward to welcoming a new wave of operators into the spotlight.

NGĀ UARA O TĒNEI WHIWHINGA || THE VALUES OF THIS AWARD

TUAKIRITANGA Identity	Understand and celebrate the identity [<i>he mata wai</i>] and stories of people and place - both visitors and hosts - engaged in tourism.
MANAAKITANGA Generosity and hospitality	Interactions with those encountered [<i>he mata nui</i>] are conducted in a way that seeks to enhance their mana.
KAITIAKITANGA Guardianship	Cherish [<i>me matapopore</i>] and grow the cultural, social, economic, and environmental well-being of those encountered, enhancing the relationship between people, place, and traditional knowledge systems.
KOTAHITANGA Unity	Enabling others in our community to achieve/grow through knowledge sharing and collaborating. Working collaboratively with community, business or other stakeholders to strengthen and enable better business practices that supports the aspirations [<i>he mata moe</i>] of whānau, hapū and iwi.
TE REO ME NGĀ TIKANGA MĀORI Māori Customs and Language	The mana of te reo and tikanga and that of the people associated is enhanced by its inclusion.

What are the judges looking for?

Judges will consider your experience against the three criteria below.

Applications should align with either the values above or others from your whānau, hapū, or iwi.

Your application should also include an **explanation of what these identified values mean to you or your organisation.**

- **Leadership** – a Māori tourism business that champions and leads an experience that delivers against the identified values and contributes to whānau, hapū or iwi aspirations.
- **Operational Excellence** – a Māori tourism business that has an experience that is successfully planned and executed, integrating the identified values and a culture of continuous improvement to deliver an outstanding visitor experience.
- **Impact and Outcomes** – a Māori tourism business that has an experience that enriches the local communities including whānau, hapū, iwi, contributing to the well-being of people and places. It demonstrates and embodies the identified values of your experience.

Judging criteria

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

Statement:* A brief introduction of your experience and why you should win this award (150 words)

1. Leadership (up to 400 words) 40 points

- How does your business deliver a successful and values-based experience related to Māori tourism?
- How does this experience demonstrate leadership?
- How does your experience embody or promote the identified values associated with this award?

2. Operational Excellence (up to 300 words) 30 points

- What was the process taken to understand the values your experience aligns with and how were these integrated into the business plan and delivery.
- How has your experience been developed, evaluated and improved upon?

3. Impact and Outcomes (up to 300 words) 30 points

- Please provide solid examples of financial and non-financial metrics/results, impacts and outcomes of your economic sustainability practices. It would enhance your entry if you can provide information over multiple years.
- Have any benefits been achieved above and beyond what was expected?
- How are the identified values manifested in these outcomes?

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, the entry and submission process or the terms and conditions, please contact events@tia.org.nz.

Brought to you by:



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