



2026 Cook Islands People's Choice Awards

Terms and Conditions

These terms and conditions ("Terms") outline the rules and guidelines for participating in the 2026 Cook Islands People's Choice Awards ("Awards"). The awards are organised by the Cook Islands Tourism Marketing Corporation (CIT), hereinafter referred to as the "Organiser". By participating in the Awards, you agree to abide by these Terms in their entirety.

Nominations:

- **Nominator Eligibility (person making the nomination):**
Nominations can be made by any person who has visited, is visiting, or resides in the Cook Islands. This includes visitors, community members, or industry stakeholders who wish to recognise outstanding individuals within the Cook Islands tourism industry and wider community.
- **Nominee Criteria (individual being nominated):**
Nominees must be individuals who are residing in and a part of the Cook Islands community. Previous winners of the same category cannot win in the immediate following year. They can be nominated, but these nominations will not proceed to the voting period.
- **Nomination Process:**
Nominations must be submitted online through the official Awards portal at www.cookislands.travel/pca within the nomination period.

Nomination Categories:

- **Kia Orana Champions - Individual Category** Recognising passionate individuals who deliver authentic, personal interactions that turn visits into lasting memories.
 - **Tour Guide of the Year, Tangata Kave Karere o te Mata'iti:** Recognises an individual who creates unforgettable visitor experiences by sharing rich cultural stories and knowledge.
 - **Hospitality Hero, Aka'epaepaanga i te To'a:** Celebrates an individual whether working in food and beverage, accommodation, or retail, who consistently goes above and beyond to ensure a memorable service for guests.
 - **Pa Enea Ambassador, Tangata Kite Karere o te Pa Enea:** Showcases an individual who actively promotes tourism in the Pa Enea, sharing its unique culture and experiences with the world.
 - **Mana Tiaki Guardian, Akono'anga i te Mana Tiaki:** Honours an individual who actively protects and preserves the Cook Islands' environment and culture, upholding the values of their community and inspiring others to do the same.
 - **Innovation Icon, Tangata Akatupu i te kite O'u:** Shines a light on an individual who thinks outside the box. Innovation isn't just about technology, but about new ways of thinking, working, or creating value. This could be through the tools they use, the experiences they create, or the way they blend traditional knowledge and practices with modern approaches.
- CIT reserves the right to reallocate nomination or remove nomination if the individual does not meet nominated category criteria.

Nomination Criteria

- The following categories have specific eligibility requirements. CIT reserves the right to verify eligibility, reassign nominees to a more appropriate category, or disqualify any nominee who does not meet the stated criteria.
 - **Tour Guide of the Year, Tangata Kave Karere o te Mata'iti:** The nominee must be currently employed and working as a tour guide within the Cook Islands.
 - **Hospitality Hero, Aka'epaepaanga i te To'a:** The nominee must be currently employed in the hospitality industry or have prior experience working in hospitality.
 - **Pa Enea Ambassador, Tangata Kite Karere o te Pa Enea:** The nominee must be the nominee's main place of residence, and must have been for at least 12 months as of 1 September 2025. Time spent away from their home island for work, study, medical, family or other temporary reasons does not affect eligibility, provided the nominee's home base remains in the Pa Enea.

Nomination Period:

- **Nominations Open:** 12:00noon (CKT), Tuesday 01 September, 2026
- **Nominations Close:** 12:00noon (CKT), Tuesday 08 September, 2026

Nomination Exclusions:

- Self-nominations are not permitted.
- Employees of CIT are eligible to submit nominations, but are not eligible to vote (see Vote Criteria).

Nomination Review

- CIT will review and compile a shortlist of the top five (5) Finalist Nominees for each category after the nomination period ends.
- Finalists are vetted for eligibility and alignment with award criteria by CIT.
- All shortlisted finalists will be contacted and given the opportunity to accept or decline their nomination before proceeding to the public voting stage.
- Nominees must confirm their acceptance within 24 hours of being notified. If a nominee does not respond within the given timeframe or declines the nomination, the next highest-nominated eligible nominee will be offered the place in the finalist list.

Voting Period:

- **Voting Opens:** Tuesday 15 September, 2026
- **Voting Closes:** Tuesday 22 September, 2026
- **Voting Platform:** Voting for the 2026 Cook Islands People's Choice Award will take place exclusively on the official Cook Islands Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/theCookIslands/>

Voting Instructions:

1. To cast your vote, visit the official Cook Islands Facebook page during the voting period.
2. Navigate to the Individual Finalist Nominees photo albums on the official Cook Islands Facebook page.
3. For each finalist nominee you wish to vote for, simply react to their respective image by clicking the desired reaction (e.g., like, love, care, etc.). Each reaction counts as one (1) vote for that nominee.
4. You may vote for multiple finalist nominees, but you can only vote once per finalist nominee using your Facebook account.

Vote Criteria:

1. Only reactions (e.g., like, love, care, etc.) on the finalist nominees' images within the designated photo album on the official Cook Islands Facebook page will be considered valid votes.
2. Reactions made on shared posts, comments, or other unrelated content will not be counted as votes.
3. Any votes received after the closing of the voting period will not be considered in the final tally.
4. In the event of a tie, the organiser will implement a fair and transparent tiebreaker procedure to determine the winner of the People's Choice Award. Details of the tiebreaker procedure will be announced if a tie occurs.
5. Only genuine Facebook users' interactions will count towards final votes. Any votes found from paid or "bot" accounts will be removed from the final count and may result in disqualification for the finalist(s).
6. The organisers reserve the right to disqualify and exclude votes that do not adhere to these instructions and limitations.
7. Employees of CIT are not eligible to vote. Any reactions identified as originating from these individuals will be removed from the final tally.
8. Final results are at the discretion of the organiser. The organiser's decision is final and binding.

Awards and Prizes:**Individual Category Winners**

- Title: Kia Orana Champion (per category)
- Prize: Cook Islands experiences to the value of NZD \$500, chosen by the winner.
- The prize may be used across tours and activities, accommodation, dining, retail and similar Cook Islands experiences. It must be used within the Cook Islands.
- CIT will meet with each winner to discuss how they would like to use their prize. CIT will then make the arrangements, bookings or source the vouchers on the winner's behalf. Winners do not book or pay for anything themselves.
- Preference will be given to Cook Islands Quality Assured (CIQA) operators. Final choice of supplier is at the discretion of CIT.
- The prize must be claimed by 1 March 2027 by confirming the chosen experiences with CIT. Any prize not claimed by this date is forfeited.
- All prizes and awards are non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash, in whole or in part. Any unused value is forfeited.

Pa Enea Ambassador - additional prize

- In addition to the prize above, the Pa Enea Ambassador winner will receive return flights from their home island to Rarotonga to attend the People's Choice Awards 2026 Ceremony on 25 September 2026, provided as a NZD \$500 Air Rarotonga flight voucher. The voucher must be used in accordance with Air Rarotonga's terms and conditions.
- Return flights are limited to the Southern Group Pa Enea and are subject to flight availability.
- CIT will provide a minimum of 3 nights' accommodation in Rarotonga for the Pa Enea Ambassador winner to attend the Ceremony. Final duration of stay is at the discretion of CIT.

Announcement of Winners:

Winners will be announced on Friday, 25 September 2026 at an official PCA event, and later on the CIT official Social Media channels and cookislands.travel/pca.

General:

1. **Disqualification:** CIT reserves the right to disqualify any nomination or participant found in violation of these Terms or engaged in fraudulent activity, or activity that goes against the Kia Orana Values.
2. **Amendments:** CIT reserves the right to modify or amend these Terms at any time without prior notice.
3. **Exclusion:** Employees of CIT may submit nominations and may be nominated by any eligible nominator. Employees of CIT are not eligible to vote.