



YOUNGTEC AWARDS

2026 GUIDELINES

About the YoungTEC Awards

The YoungTEC Awards celebrate and recognise emerging talent within New Zealand's tourism industry, highlighting young professionals who are making an outstanding contribution to the sector and shaping its future.

Presented as part of the Tourism Export Awards New Zealand, the awards acknowledge individuals who demonstrate leadership, innovation, passion, and a commitment to professional development through their involvement in YoungTEC programmes and the wider tourism community.

The awards provide recipients with valuable career development opportunities, industry recognition, and the chance to further grow their leadership capability.



YoungTEC Award Categories

- YoungTEC Rising Star Award
- YoungTEC Leadership Development Award

Key Dates

Wednesday 20 May 2026	Award entries open
Wednesday 03 June 2026	Award entries close 5pm
Thursday 04 June 2026	Judging commences for written entries
Wednesday 17 June 2026	Finalists announced
Monday 22 June 2026	Interviews for finalists in Auckland
Thursday 6 August 2026	Winners announced at the Tourism Export Awards New Zealand Dinner



Leadership Development Award

Sponsored by: Air New Zealand & Tourism New Zealand

About

This award recognises the outstanding efforts and contribution to the development of New Zealand's tourism industry by a YoungTEC member.

Winner will receive

- One-week professional development placement in one of Tourism New Zealand's international offices based in either Sydney, Shanghai or Los Angeles.
- Return economy flights sponsored by Air New Zealand.
- Accommodation for one week room only courtesy of TECNZ.

Criteria

- Be employed by/work for a company that is a current financial member of the Tourism Export Council of New Zealand
- Be a financial member of YoungTEC
- Have worked in the tourism industry more than three years
- Completed one or more YoungTEC Master Class Series
- Completed at least one Icehouse Leadership Day.



Application Outline

All entries must be endorsed by the nominee's direct manager or employer and they may be contacted during the assessment process.

1.	Your full name, title, company and contact phone/email details.	
2.	Your manager's name, title, company and contact home/email details.	
3.	Tell us about your role and what you do.	
3.	Describe your key achievement(s).	300 words 20 pts
4.	Describe how the above achievement(s) have contributed to the growth of your company/project.	200 words 20 pts
5.	Describe your contribution to New Zealand's tourism industry outside of your current role	200 words 10 pts
6.	Describe your leadership development plan for the next 1-3 years. What are your career goals and aspirations in the next 5-10 years' time.	300 words 30 pts
7.	Share your vision of the tourism industry in the future (10 - 15 years) and identify any potential challenges	300 words max 20 pts
8.	Please attach a copy of your CV	
9.	Attach supporting evidence i.e. customer satisfaction surveys, media.	

Process and judging information

- Leadership Development Award entries close 5pm Wednesday 3 June 2026.
- Entries will be reviewed by judges using a scoring system to determine the three finalists.
- Three finalists will be invited to an interview with the judges in Auckland, Monday 22 June 2026.
- Any interview expenses will be at the finalist's own cost. If not convenient for any party to attend in person, an online Teams interview can alternatively take place.
- The interview is an opportunity for the finalists to 'present' their application to the judges with some Q & A to follow.
- The judges are representatives of the sponsors being Air New Zealand, Tourism New Zealand and the Tourism Export Council of NZ.
- The winner will be announced at the at the Tourism Export Awards New Zealand evening at One New Zealand Stadium in Christchurch, Thursday 6 August 2026.
- Registration, travel and accommodation for this event is at the finalist's own cost.

Conditions

1. The prize destination will be mutually agreed upon from one of Tourism New Zealand's International offices based in either Sydney, Shanghai or Los Angeles.
2. The winning candidate will receive return Economy Class flights from their closest domestic airport to either; Sydney, Shanghai or Los Angeles, as agreed with TECNZ, TNZ and Air New Zealand.
3. The winner is responsible for paying all additional costs associated with the prize that are not specifically included including (where applicable) departure fees, levies and/or surcharges not included in the ticket, transport, meal costs, spending money, insurance, passport and visa requirements and all other incidentals.
4. Prize travel must be completed at a mutually agreed time by the sponsors and winner within twelve months of the prize announcement and is subject to booking and flight availability. Unused tickets will not be refunded or credited.
5. Accommodation to be nearby Tourism New Zealand office at a reasonable cost.
6. The travel and accommodation components of the prize cannot be converted into cash and is not transferable.
7. Travel is redeemable for carriage on Air New Zealand operated services only and will be subject to Air New Zealand's Conditions of Carriage, applicable tariffs and regulations prevailing at the time of travel, to view visit <http://www.airnewzealand.co.nz/conditions-of-carriage>. Air New Zealand reserves the right to amend such terms and conditions at any time.
8. Airpoints™ Dollars and Status Points cannot be accrued on prize air travel.
9. Applicants can choose to apply for either the Rising Star Award, or the Leadership Development Award, but are not eligible to enter both.

Rising Star Award

About

Do you hold a Frontline or Backoffice behind the scenes role, been working in the tourism industry for less than five years, have previously completed the YoungTEC Master Class Series and are keen to develop your career in tourism, then the Tourism Export Council encourages you to submit your application for the Rising Star award.

This award offers the opportunity to receive an outstanding professional development experience.

Winner will receive

- Complimentary registration to the TECNZ Conference 2026 (value \$1,250.00). Prize excludes travel and accommodation to attend conference.
- A day in Auckland at the Tourism New Zealand office and meet with an Air New Zealand representative, including air travel to Auckland.

Criteria

- Be employed by/work for a company that is a current financial member of the Tourism Export Council of New Zealand.
- Be a financial member of YoungTEC.
- Less than 5 years in the industry.
- Completed YoungTEC Master Class Series.
- Frontline or Backoffice behind the scenes employee encouraged to apply e.g. tour guide, reservations, graphic designer, gardener, cleaner etc.

Application Outline

All entries must be endorsed by the nominee's direct manager or employer and they may be contacted during the assessment process.

1.	Your full name, title, company and contact phone/email details. Please note if your current role is customer facing or back office / operations you are eligible to apply e.g. reservations, gardener, tour guide, graphic designer etc.	
2.	Your manager's name, title, company and contact home/email details.	
3.	Tell us about your role and what you do.	
4.	Educational qualifications and/or practical experience with a short statement on why you wanted to join the tourism industry.	
5.	Describe your key achievement(s) and /or highlights to date	300 words 25 pts
6.	What value do you place on teamwork and innovation in your workplace? Give an example of how you/or team has innovated to create a point of difference.	200 words 25 pts
7.	Describe your career goals & aspirations	200 words 25 pts
8.	How would winning this award contribute to your professional development?	100 words 25 pts
9.	Please attach a copy of your CV	
10.	Attach supporting evidence i.e customer satisfaction surveys, media clippings, or signed industry letters of support etc.	

Process and judging information

- Rising Star Award entries close at 5pm Wednesday 3 June 2026.
- Entries will be reviewed by judges using a scoring system to determine the three finalists.
- Three finalists will be invited to an interview with the judges in Auckland, Monday 22 June 2026.
- Any interview expenses will be at the finalist's own cost. If not convenient for any party, an online Teams interview can alternatively take place.
- The interview is an opportunity for the finalists to 'present' their application to the judges with some Q & A to follow.
- The judges for the 2026 Rising Star Award will be representatives of an external panel.
- The winner will be announced at the at the Tourism Export Awards New Zealand evening at One New Zealand Stadium in Christchurch, Thursday 6 August 2026.
- Registration, travel and accommodation for this event is at the finalist's own cost. However, the winner's registration will be reimbursed post event.

Conditions

- Applicants can choose to apply for either the 2026 Rising Star award, or the Leadership Development award, but are not eligible to enter both.
- The finalists are encouraged to attend the 2026 TECNZ Conference, with the winner's registration reimbursed post event. The winner will also receive a day in Auckland at the Tourism New Zealand office and meet with an Air New Zealand representative.
- Travel and accommodation will be at the expense of the winner.
- The prize package of 'events' is for the winning recipient. They are not transferable to another person or different company employee.
- There is no cash conversion/refund should the recipient not be able to attend any of the events that make up part the 'events' prize package.