



Aquatics Awards

Aquatics Awards recognise excellence, innovation, effectiveness that support activity within the recreation sector of New Zealand.

The Award Categories are:

- **Lifeguard of the Year**
- **Aquatic Innovation Operations**
- **Aquatic innovation Programmes**
- **Outstanding Pool**

The 2025 Aquatics Awards will be presented at the Waves 2025 Awards Dinner in Christchurch on Thursday 21 August 2025.

We encourage all finalists to attend the awards dinner, as winners will NOT be notified prior to the Awards' ceremony. All nominations are to be made electronically via our website..

Nominations close on Monday 30 June 2025 at 4pm.

Submit your nominations online via the links below

[**Lifeguard of the Year Nomination Form**](#)

[**Aquatic Innovation Operations Nomination Form**](#)

[**Aquatic innovation Programmes Nomination Form**](#)

[**Outstanding Pool Nomination Form**](#)

Please send all enquiries to rhiann@nzrecreation.org.nz before this time.



Aquatics Awards

The Lifeguard of the Year

The Lifeguard of the Year Award recognises an outstanding lifeguard who contributes to their facility, community and the aquatics industry in Aotearoa.

We are looking for those exceptional people that are much more than just a lifeguard..

The one that are role models to staff and fosters great connections with customers. The one that identifies problems and seeks solutions.

.The one who enhances the aquatic experience for both customers and staff through their enthusiasm, selfless commitment and professionalism.

The one that contributes to the development of lifeguarding role and the aquatic industry.

This is an opportunity for you to acknowledge your lifeguard's mahi and to celebrate this with their industry peers.

Outstanding Pool

This award is for an outstanding facility where the principal purpose of the built structure is aquatic recreation. A facility which strives to demonstrate excellence in safe operations, fostering a supportive and engaged working environment, meeting community needs, sustainable practices, access and inclusion and providing a welcoming space for all.

It is important that sufficient objective data/evidence is provided for areas such as 'usage' and 'finance'. **Note:** The facility must have current Poolsafe status.



Aquatics Awards

Aquatic Innovation Award

This award recognises the success of a programme or project which shows innovation, community engagement, industry leadership, diversity and inclusion and overall sustainability. We are looking for an innovation that enhances the aquatic experience, streamlines the operation of the facility and/or contributes to the wider industry. There are two categories

Operations – initiatives or innovations that improve the operation of the facility in areas of sustainability, efficiency, cost saving, staff management and training.

Programmes - Innovative programmes for your communities for water safety and aquatic recreation and staff well-being initiatives.

This is an opportunity for you to showcase your mahi and to celebrate this with your industry peers.



Aquatics Awards

Criteria - Lifeguard of the Year

Each nominee/nominator must supply a written application with information that meets the 6 criteria below. Each criteria is weighted and will be scored. It's important that you supply information as per the topic headers. Supporting evidence can be in the form of reports, video, photographs, slide shows or written testimonials from peers and/or customers

Applicant Video

One-minute-high level overview of the person

Qualifications/ Work experience

Identify any qualifications gained by nominee. These can be external or internal but some must be aquatics specific.

Commitment and dedication

Explain how the nominee has shown commitment and dedication to the role of lifeguarding both within their current organisation and previous service. Provide supporting evidence which could include employee awards, news or social media articles, previous awards nominations.

Customer Service and Communications

Explain and give examples of how the nominee has demonstrated exceptional customer service and communication skills. Provide supporting evidence in the form of customer testimonials, qualifications, training courses etc

Role Modelling and Lifeguarding attributes

Detail how the nominee role models on a daily basis. How do they demonstrate their lifeguarding attributes. This can include supervising and mentoring new staff, developing and delivering training both on the job and at organised sessions. Provide evidence in the form of videoing training sessions, testimonials from other staff.

Development of LG role and initiatives

Explain how the nominee has been involved in the development of lifeguarding initiatives and projects. These can be both internal and external. Provide supporting evidence.

Recognition

Testimonials from peers, management and customers. Awards such as employee of the month, community service, other organisations.



Aquatics Awards

Criteria - Aquatic Innovation Award

Each nominee/nominator must supply a written application with information that meets the 8 criteria below. Each criteria is weighted and will be scored. It's important that you supply information as per the topic headers.

Applicant Video

One-minute-high level overview of the project / person

Innovation

Explain how the project / person shows efficiency or improvement over time

Community engagement / Involvement

Explain how the project / person has/had a level of community involvement and meaningful engagement within the development or operation

Excellence

Explain how the project / person has demonstrated overall excellence and the capacity for a case study for other agencies and bodies.

Achievement

Identify the goals, outputs, and results that were projected or anticipated for/by this project / person. Deliverables, usage, user satisfaction, outcomes and accessibility (in its widest sense) are prime criteria.

Efficiencies and effectiveness

Identify any efficiency and effectiveness of the project / person, quantified through the provision of adequate budget and management effectiveness.

Sustainability

Identify and report on environmental sustainability and any other items that are relevant e.g. financial and social sustainability that this project / person has delivered on.

Diversity and Inclusion

Describe the efforts made to ensure the project / person encourages usage from members in the community. Consider Te Tiriti, disability, gender, ethnicity etc.



Aquatics Awards

Criteria – Outstanding Pool

Each nominee/nominator must supply a written application with information that meets the 8 criteria below. Each criteria is weighted and will be scored. It's important that you supply information as per the topic headers.

Applicant Video One minute video showcasing the facility.

Innovation - Please describe how your facility is innovative and demonstrates efficiency or improvement over others that have gone before. This could be in operations, customer services, programmes, staff culture etc..

Community Engagement - Please show the level of community involvement (not just user numbers)and meaningful engagement within the development and/or operation of your facility. Feedback surveys, consultations on projects or programmes, connection with Iwi, local schools, regional sports trusts and other organisations.

Excellence - Show how your facility demonstrates overall excellence and industry leadership and provides the capacity for a case study for other agencies or bodies.

Achievement - Describe what the goals, outputs and results were projected or anticipated for the facility and how well it has done against those. Usage statistics, user satisfaction/references and outcomes are key here.

Efficiency And Effectiveness - Efficiency and effectiveness is quantified through the provision of adequate budget details. It is not the size of the budget that is significant but the impact on your community. These details will be considered in confidence and not shared or used for any purpose other than judging of these awards.

Sustainability - Identify and report on environmental sustainability considerations that your pool has delivered on. Include other forms of sustainability including financial, social etc that are relevant.

Diversity, Equity And Inclusion - Describe what has been done to ensure the initiative encourages diversity, equity and inclusion at your pool. Consider Te Tiriti o Waitangi, disability, gender, ethnicity etc.



Aquatics Awards

Judging

- Judging is conducted by a panel of experienced aquatics recreation practitioners. There are separate panels for each award.
- Judges are asked to declare if a conflict of interest exists and if so, are excluded from the judging of that submission.
- Judges may not be familiar with your organisations size, location, population, and operating budget so, if appropriate, include this information in responses so judges can put applications into context.
- Awards are judged in accordance with the award criteria.
- Should the respective judging panel believe that no nomination meets the criteria or standard of excellence required, it will not be obliged to confer the award.
- All decisions of the judging panel are final, and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Supporting documentation from colleagues and members of the community is encouraged for Lifeguard of the Year and Outstanding Pool.