

1. INTRODUCTION

This document explains the basis, scope and structure of Te Kāhui Raraunga Charitable Trust's .aio TLD policy suite. It accompanies the appended policies and is intended to support the preparation of the .aio TLD application for the ICANN New gTLD Program: 2026 Round.

The document explains why the appended policies have been selected, how they operate together and why other policies commonly published on generic top level domain (gTLD) registry websites are not reproduced in this suite.

The appended policies are intended to provide the substantive registry rules needed to protect the purpose and integrity of the .aio TLD namespace at launch. Other relevant obligations will need to be implemented separately, including through the Registry-Registrar Agreement, registrar registration agreements, registry procedures and technical systems. The policy suite does not replace those instruments.

2. ICANN REQUIREMENTS, REGISTRY POLICY AUTONOMY, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE APPLICATION

The authoritative requirements for the 2026 Round are contained in the current Applicant Guidebook, the form of Base Registry Agreement approved for the round, its specifications, applicable Consensus Policies and Temporary Policies, and other binding ICANN requirements. Successful applicants will enter into a Registry Agreement that defines the registry operator's rights and obligations and the technical and operational standards for operating a top level domain (TLD). These requirements establish a mandatory baseline. They do not, however, prescribe every rule governing participation in a particular namespace.

Subject to the Registry Agreement, applicable ICANN policy and law, a registry operator may adopt additional requirements and restrictions that are consistent with and appropriate to the purpose of its TLD. However in the context of the 2026 round, this policy autonomy must be exercised consistently with any community commitments made in its application and embodied in the Registry Agreement.

3. INDUSTRY TRENDS AND EVIDENCE BASE

The appended policy suite has been informed by the 2026 Round materials, commentary on the 2012 application round, comparative review of registry policy suites and engagement with .aio TLD.

The research indicates that registry policies are most effective when the principal obligations are consolidated into a manageable number of documents, abuse requirements are stated clearly, registration-data obligations are aligned with the

current ICANN framework, and enforcement processes are transparent, proportionate and capable of consistent administration.

Community-oriented and culturally specific TLDs also demonstrate the value of eligibility requirements, nexus or intended-use commitments, restrictions on misleading use, and culturally protective naming controls.

4. ASSUMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

The policy suite is developed assuming that .aio TLD will operate as a dedicated, limited-purpose community namespace rather than a general-purpose open gTLD. Its policies must therefore protect the .aio TLD mission, give effect to the relevant community's authority to define participation, and establish requirements that are clear, measurable and capable of consistent administration through registry and registrar processes.

.aio TLD's instructions and community inputs are the starting point for the policy design. Comparative research and industry practice may inform drafting, but do not displace those instructions.

The policy suite is confined to registry-level domain-name governance. The test applied here is whether a standalone .aio TLD instrument is necessary to state a registry-specific rule, implement a .aio TLD community commitment, or provide a registry-controlled process that is not adequately supplied by an existing binding instrument. It does not purport to replace binding ICANN policies, contractual instruments or specialist operational documentation.

The following are excluded:

Registry-Registrar Agreement. The Registry-Registrar Agreement is the contract through which the registry imposes relevant obligations on registrars and requires appropriate flow-down to registrants. It must be prepared separately and reviewed against the final Registry Agreement, the registry service model and applicable law. The policies inform that agreement but are not a substitute for it.

Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy and Uniform Rapid Suspension system. The Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) is an ICANN Consensus Policy and the Uniform Rapid Suspension (URS) is an ICANN-mandated rights-protection mechanism. They apply through the ICANN contractual framework and their own rules. Reproducing or redrafting them as .aio TLD policies would risk inconsistency and could imply a power to amend instruments that .aio TLD must apply as issued. The suite therefore refers to them where relevant but does not restate them.

Registration Data Policy and privacy materials. The Registration Data Policy is an ICANN Consensus Policy applying directly to gTLD registry operators and ICANN-

accredited registrars. .aio TLD will nevertheless require separate implementation documentation, including any data-protection agreement, privacy notice, disclosure procedure, retention schedule and internal controls required by the ICANN policy and applicable privacy law. Those documents concern legal compliance and operational processing rather than the community-registration rules addressed by this suite.

Other ICANN and operational materials. Data escrow specifications, registry continuity arrangements, DNSSEC practice statements, registry service provider procedures, incident-response plans, technical service documentation and detailed complaints manuals are excluded because they are governed by ICANN requirements or require specialist legal, privacy, security or operational input. Organisational policies not specific to domain-name governance, including employment, procurement, supplier, ESG and corporate risk policies, are also outside scope.

5. FRAMEWORK FOR TECHNICAL AND CULTURAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The policy-development process requires a clear distinction between technical-operational responsibilities and community-governance authority.

InternetNZ serves as the primary drafter of the registry policy suite and is responsible for developing the mechanisms by which policies are administered and enforced. This includes registrar flow-down requirements, compliance processes, technical standards, registry operations, and alignment with applicable ICANN requirements.

.aio TLD and the relevant community authorities retain responsibility for defining the substantive values, eligibility requirements, naming principles, cultural safeguards, and broader policy objectives of the TLD. These inputs establish the community mandate that the registry policies are intended to reflect and protect.

This allocation of responsibilities creates a practical policy development model. .aio TLD and its community determine the purpose, scope, and substantive criteria of the namespace, while InternetNZ translates those requirements into a coherent policy framework and drafts the individual policies.

6. .AIO TLD POLICY SUITE

6.1 Policy Objectives and features

The appended policy suite contains the registry-specific instruments required to express the .aio TLD community-registration model and its launch.

.aio TLD is intended to operate as a dedicated community namespace. The suite must therefore do more than regulate ordinary registration mechanics. It must support Indigenous community self-identification, cultural connection, collective benefit and

the authority of the .aio TLD community to determine participation in the .aio TLD namespace. Those objectives are implemented through five connected functions: eligibility; name selection; validation; acceptable use; and compliance and operational enforcement.

6.2 Proposed Policy Taxonomy

The policies have been consolidated where possible so that each document has a distinct function and the suite can be read as a whole.

The following are included:

.aio TLD Registration Policy. The .aio TLD Registration Policy states who may register, the evidence and attestations required, the pre-registration validation process, name-selection requirements, continuing obligations and available compliance measures. It is the key feature of the community-registration model.

.aio TLD Reserved and Restricted Names Policy. The .aio TLD Reserved and Restricted Names Policy gives effect to ICANN reserved-name requirements and establishes .aio TLD controls for operational, legal, community and culturally significant or sensitive names. A separate policy is justified because these controls may apply independently of ordinary eligibility review and may require distinct approval or allocation processes.

.aio TLD Acceptable Use Policy. The .aio TLD Acceptable Use Policy states prohibited uses and the registry's reporting, assessment and enforcement framework. It supplements ICANN's DNS Abuse baseline by recording .aio TLD-specific obligations concerning community integrity, impersonation and misleading use.

.aio TLD Internationalised Domain Name Policy. The .aio TLD Internationalised Domain Name Policy sets the registry rules for IDN labels, tables, variants and technical validation. It is required because IDN implementation depends on registry-specific language or script choices and must operate consistently with ICANN IDN requirements and the .aio TLD naming framework.

.aio TLD Launch Policy. The .aio TLD Launch Policy establishes the start-up sequence, Sunrise, Trademark Claims, any pre-registration phase, allocation and contention rules, publication requirements and launch enforcement arrangements. These matters are time-limited but require a clear public instrument before launch.

.aio TLD Sunrise Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy. The .aio TLD Sunrise Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy provides the required mechanism for challenging failures to comply with .aio TLD's Sunrise allocation and registration rules. It is separate from the UDRP, URS and Trade Mark Clearing House (TMCH) procedures because its scope is limited to Sunrise compliance and registry implementation.

The appended policies should be read together with the final Registry Agreement, Registry-Registrar Agreement, registrar registration terms, applicable ICANN Consensus Policies and operational procedures. Where a binding ICANN requirement applies directly, that requirement prevails. Where .aio TLD has adopted a more specific community rule that is consistent with ICANN requirements, the .aio TLD rule forms part of the conditions for registration and use.

.AIO TLD Registration Policy

Version 1.0 - Effective 11 August, 2026.

Introduction

This Policy sets out the rules governing eligibility, name selection, registration, and renewal of a .aio TLD Domain Name.

Interpretation

In this Policy:

“Applicant” means a person or entity applying to register a .aio TLD Domain Name.

“Authorised Reviewer” means .aio TLD or a nominee appointed by .aio TLD to assess an application or registration.

“.aio TLD” means Te Kāhui Raraunga Charitable Trust as registry operator for the .aio TLD top-level domain.

“.aio TLD Domain Name” means a domain name registered at the second level under .aio TLD.

“Eligibility Category” means a category in the eligibility requirements section of this Policy.

“ICANN” means the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

“Policy” means this .aio TLD Registration Policy.

“Registrar” means an ICANN-accredited registrar authorised by .aio TLD to offer .aio TLD Domain Names.

“Registrant” means the person or entity recorded as the holder of a registered .aio TLD Domain Name.

“Registration Agreement” means the agreement between a Registrar and a Registrant.

“Reserved and Restricted Names Policy” means the current .aio TLD Reserved and Restricted Names Policy.

1. Scope

1.1 This Policy applies to every application for, registration of, renewal of and transfer of a .aio TLD Domain Name.

2. Eligibility requirements

2.1 An Applicant must satisfy at least one of the following Eligibility Categories:

- a. an Indigenous representative or governance body;
- b. an Indigenous community-based, cultural, educational or service organisation;
- c. an Indigenous community-benefitting service organisation, project or enterprise; or
- d. an individual or organisation with a genuine and demonstrable connection to the .aio TLD community.

3. Application and pre-registration review

- 3.1 At the time of application, an Applicant must:
 - a. select one Eligibility Category;
 - b. attest that the Applicant satisfies that category;
 - c. state the intended use of the .aio TLD Domain Name;
 - d. attest that the selected name and intended use comply with all .aio TLD policies;
 - e. provide complete and accurate registration information; and
 - f. provide documentary evidence and other information reasonably required by the Authorised Reviewer.
- 3.2 The Authorised Reviewer must assess the Applicant's category, attestation, registration information, evidence, intended use and selected name before activation.
- 3.3 The Authorised Reviewer may approve, decline or hold an application, or request further information.
- 3.4 An Applicant must provide requested information within 21 calendar days.
- 3.5 An application may be declined if the Applicant does not provide sufficient information within that period or does not establish compliance with this Policy.

4. Name selection requirements

- 4.1 An applied-for name must:
 - a. have a clear and reasonable connection to the Applicant's selected Eligibility Category or stated intended use;
 - b. comply with the Reserved and Restricted Names Policy and the .aio TLD Internationalised Domain Name Policy;
 - c. not falsely imply authority, representation, sponsorship, endorsement or affiliation;
 - d. not otherwise be deceptive, misleading, abusive or an impersonation of another person or entity;
 - e. not infringe the rights of another person;

- f. not be inconsistent with the mission of .aio TLD.

5. Ongoing obligations

- 5.1 A Registrant must, throughout the registration term:
 - a. continue to satisfy an Eligibility Category;
 - b. keep registration information complete and accurate;
 - c. use the .aio TLD Domain Name consistently with the Registrant's attestation, intended use and all .aio TLD policies;
 - d. not license, sub-delegate or otherwise make the name available to a person that does not satisfy this Policy; and
 - e. respond to a compliance enquiry and provide reasonable supporting information when requested.

6. Audits, complaints and enforcement

- 6.1 .aio TLD may conduct risk-based audits and investigate complaints concerning eligibility or name selection.
- 6.2 Unless urgent action is required to address DNS abuse, legal risk or material harm, .aio TLD must give the Registrant a reasonable opportunity to respond.
- 6.3 Where an Applicant or Registrant does not establish compliance, .aio TLD may decline, hold, lock, suspend, transfer, delete or decline renewal of the .aio TLD Domain Name, or impose another proportionate measure.
- 6.4 .aio TLD may take immediate interim action where reasonably necessary to prevent or mitigate serious harm.

7. Review of a decision

- 7.1 An Applicant or Registrant may request review of a decision under this Policy in accordance with the complaints or review procedure published by .aio TLD.

8. Records Retention

- 8.1 .aio TLD must retain all material eligibility attestations, supporting evidence, assessment and review records, and enforcement documentation relating to a registration for the duration of the registration term and for any additional retention period specified in .aio TLD's Privacy Policy, subject to applicable laws.

9. Policy changes

- 9.1 .aio TLD may amend this Policy from time to time and must review the Policy in accordance with its established policy review and governance processes.

- 9.2 Any material modification to this Policy that affects existing registrations shall be accompanied by reasonable notice and any transition measures that .aio TLD considers appropriate in the circumstances, except where immediate action is required to comply with applicable law, ICANN requirements, or to protect the security, stability, or integrity of the .aio TLD top level domain.