

1. INTRODUCTION

This document explains the basis, scope and structure of Te Kāhui Raraunga Charitable Trust .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 Reserved and Restricted Names Policy

Version 1.0 - Effective 11 August, 2026.

Introduction

This Policy governs names that .aio TLD reserves from registration or makes available only subject to stated conditions.

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 person or community-led body 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.

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

“Policy” means this .aio TLD Reserved and Restricted Names Policy.

“Reserved Name” means a name unavailable for registration unless released in accordance with applicable ICANN requirements and this Policy.

“Restricted Name” means a name that may be registered only if specified conditions and approval requirements are met.

“Names List” means any operational list maintained by .aio TLD of Reserved Names or Restricted Names.

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

1. Scope

1.1 This Policy applies to all applications for, and registrations of, .aio TLD Domain Names.

1.2 The Names Lists are maintained separately from this Policy.

2. Names reserved under ICANN requirements

2.1 .aio TLD must reserve and otherwise treat names in accordance with the .aio TLD Registry Agreement, ICANN Consensus Policies and other binding ICANN requirements, including the requirements applicable to:

- a. labels reserved for registry operations;
- b. two-character ASCII labels;
- c. country and territory names;
- d. International Olympic Committee, Red Cross and Red Crescent, intergovernmental organisation and other protected identifiers; and
- e. any other label required to be reserved or blocked by ICANN.

2.2 A name required to be reserved by ICANN may be released, allocated or activated only where and to the extent permitted by the then-current ICANN requirements and any required approval, authorisation or implementation procedure has been completed.

3. Other Reserved Names

3.1 .aio TLD may reserve a name where reasonably necessary for:

- a. registry operation, testing, security, stability or emergency response;
- b. .aio TLD or community governance functions;
- c. compliance with applicable law, a court order or a competent authority's requirement;
- d. protection of a name pending allocation through an approved process;
- e. correction of an operational error or resolution of a dispute; or
- f. another purpose consistent with the .aio TLD mission and policies.

4. Restricted Names

4.1 .aio TLD may restrict a name where the name:

- a. is subject to a legal restriction or protected right;
- b. could falsely imply official status, authority, representation, sponsorship or affiliation;
- c. is misleading, deceptive, abusive or an impersonation;
- d. has specific cultural significance;

- e. is required for equitable, orderly or community-benefitting allocation; or
- f. otherwise requires enhanced review to protect the mission, integrity or trusted character of .aio TLD.

5. Application for a Restricted Name

- 5.1 An Applicant for a Restricted Name must satisfy the .aio TLD Registration Policy and provide information sufficient to establish:
 - a. the Applicant's eligibility and authority to use the name;
 - b. the connection between the name, the Applicant and the proposed use;
 - c. that the registration will not mislead, impersonate or materially harm another person or the .aio TLD community;
 - d. compliance with any category-specific conditions; and
 - e. any safeguards required by the Authorised Reviewer.
- 5.2 The Authorised Reviewer may approve, decline or hold the application, request further information, or approve it subject to conditions.
- 5.3 The basis for any decision or action taken must be recorded.

6. Names List and allocation

- 6.1 .aio TLD may establish and maintain one or more Names Lists for the purposes of this Policy.
- 6.2 .aio TLD may determine, in its discretion, not to publish all or part of a Names List where publication could give rise to rise to security, misuse, legal, cultural, operational, or other material risks.
- 6.3 To the extent reasonably practicable, .aio TLD must publish the categories of names to which a Names List applies, together with the applicable eligibility, approval, allocation, or release criteria and the associated application or approval process.
- 6.4 .aio TLD may allocate, release, or otherwise make a name available through an application process, community allocation process, tender, auction, registry use, or any other transparent method consistent with applicable ICANN requirements and .aio TLD policies.
- 6.5 The inclusion of a name on a Names List, or its previous reservation, restriction, blocking, or unavailability, does not confer any right, interest, entitlement, priority, or expectation of registration in that name.

7. Post-registration review and enforcement

- 7.1 .aio TLD may investigate a registered name if it appears to be reserved or restricted, was approved on materially inaccurate information, breaches an approval condition, or no longer satisfies this Policy.
- 7.2 .aio TLD may impose conditions or decline, hold, lock, suspend, transfer, delete or decline renewal of an investigated name.
- 7.3 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.

8. Review of a decision

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

9. Policy changes

- 9.1 .aio TLD must periodically review this Policy and the Names Lists established under it and may add, remove, or reclassify any name.
- 9.2 Where a change affects an existing registration, .aio TLD must provide appropriate transitional arrangements and reasonable notice, unless 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.