

Pop Culture Hiroshima (PCH) New Zealand Preliminaries Rules

This year Overload will be selecting the first ever duo to represent New Zealand at **Pop Culture Hiroshima (PCH) 2026** in Japan.

As an official NZ partner, Overload will be hosting a New Zealand cosplay competition for teams of two as part of the PCH programme. The winning team will then travel to Japan to represent New Zealand in PCH for the international performance showcase.

About PCH

Pop Culture Hiroshima (PCH) is a Japanese pop culture convention held in Hiroshima City that focuses on 'otaku' culture.

The event features cosplay, anime music, talk sessions with voice actors, stage shows, and more. Representing cosplayers are invited from around the world to participate in various events, including a Cosplay Parade and Stage Performance.

PCH is an incredible opportunity for cultural exchange and international friendship within the global community.

Prize

The winning duo will receive:

- 2x Round-trip airfares to PCH in Japan (*both competitors must depart from the same NZ airport*)
- Accommodation for the duration of the PCH event
- A scheduled itinerary of events and tours provided by the PCH organisers.

Important Dates

Submissions open: Friday May 1st, 2026

Submissions close: Midnight Sunday 2nd August, 2026

Acceptance emails sent out at latest by: Sunday 9th August, 2026

Overload Competition: 26 - 27th September, 2026

PCH Japan Event: October 31 and November 1, 2026

Eligibility

- Must compete as a duo. Both team members must:
 - Be New Zealand citizens
 - Be over the age of 18 at the time of Overload 2026
 - Have a valid passport and be available to travel and participate at PCH October 31 – November 1, 2026 (There will be a few additional days required for travel and extra activities around the event days)
- Characters chosen for the entry must be from the same series.
- Characters may be from any Asian media, including:
anime, manga, manhwa, manhua, donghua, live-action TV series, video games, or mobile games
- Costumes entered in the competition must not have previously won any other competition.

Submission

The online submission form will ask you to submit the following:

- Main reference image of character (.png or jpg. 1 per team member)
- Combined team costume folio (maximum 15 pages, submitted as a PDF) containing
 - Reference images
 - Photos depicting construction progress
 - A breakdown of the costumes including details for any purchased or modified elements.
 - A list of any additional resources used (such as, but not limited to - downloaded or purchased patterns, 3D models, or pepakura)

Judges will be provided with a copy of your main reference images on the day of the competition. You are welcome to bring a physical copy of your folio to prejudging, but must take it with you when you leave.

Your costume does not need to be complete at the time of submission, but please ensure you submit photos/details of your current progress so we can judge your entry in its best state.

How will I know if my entry form has been received / accepted?

You will receive an automatic email saying that we have received your entry.

Notification of acceptance results will be sent out by the latest **August 9th 2026**.

Costumes

The focus of the PCH Overload competition is to create an engaging and enjoyable performance.

You do not need to select a complicated outfit/character design to get full marks. Construction points are awarded for neat and clean construction as well as the % of the costume you have constructed yourself. The range of techniques and difficulty of techniques will not be scored.

You may enter with purchased costumes or components. However, you are only able to score points in the construction category for the elements you have made yourself.

What restrictions are there on costumes?

Access to stage due to disability or mobility needs will be accommodated. Just let us know in the submission form.

The following rules MUST be followed (failing to adhere may result in disqualification):

- Overload NZ Anime & Manga Convention is a family event, and your costume should reflect this.
- Please ensure your costume is fully cured/dry (paint, glue, resin, etc)
- Please make sure that all body paint is sealed (in fact we recommend using coloured tights or body suits where possible).
- Excessive nudity and gore is not allowed.

What props are allowed?

We ask that all props be made so that they will not harm or cause risk to those around you.

- No real weapons.
- Any firearm-looking props, including fantasy or futuristic weapons must have orange safety tips (you can apply orange tape to your completed prop). NO realistic guns or firearms are allowed. If you are unsure as to whether your firearm would be accepted, please email for approval. Please keep in mind that the safety of everyone is more important than a prop.
- No metal-bladed or sharp props. Props are to be made of foam, plastic, wood, resin, or other such cosplay materials. All props must have a blunt edge/tip.
- No projectile props of any kind are permitted. You may use water pistols or Nerf guns as a base, but they must be made permanently non-functioning. You must have documented proof of how you have made the base non-functioning in your construction portfolio. Simply not loading projectiles is not good enough.
- All props, including stage props, cannot be more than 2m in any dimension or weigh more than 5kg each.

If you have any queries as to whether your prop would be accepted, please email us with a description and image example.

Non-compliant props will not be allowed on stage.

Performance

Specifications

- Performances must not exceed 2min 30sec.
- Video
 - Your performance should include a backing video. It does not need to be complex, and should support your performance.
 - Your video for your performance should be exported as
 - .mp4 format
 - 16:9 aspect ratio or 1080p resolution
 - Remember to [normalise](#) all audio in your video before submission. You can use free software such as Audacity to do this.
 - All audio must be pre-recorded. We do not permit microphones to be used during performances
 - Music/dialogue/video should be family friendly.
- Stage size : details coming soon
- Screen size : details coming soon

Performance safety

For the safety of both you and the other entrants/attendees, please note-

- No mess is to be created during your time on stage, or left on stage after your skit.
- No fire, explosives, or other incendiary devices.
- No smoke effects.
- No throwing anything on the stage or at the audience. This includes but is not limited to: confetti and glitter of any sort, food items, liquids (including fake blood), etc.

If your skit includes any kind of dance or fight choreography please email Overload

(cosplay@overload.co.nz) BEFORE your submission to confirm whether it is ok. If you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Props and stage sets

The team must be able to set up props on stage in under 2 minutes.

You are responsible for your props/sets. Overload does not provide volunteers to move things on/off stage.

Please remember that all stage props/set pieces cannot exceed 2m in any dimension or weigh more than 5kg each.

Note: Stage props can be stored near the stage after judging. Please let us know in your submission if you will need a place to store your props/sets as there is limited space available.

What makes a "good" performance?

A "good" performance is one that can be understood by anybody who is watching it, regardless of whether they have seen the source material or not.

Your skit should have varying levels of energy

If you get stuck, here's some performance-based competitions you can watch to get some inspiration:

[World Cosplay Summit](#) (Groups of 2)

[Extreme Cosplay Gathering](#) (Groups of 1-4)

Scoring and Judging

Scoring breakdown

A full breakdown of the points can be found [here](#).

How does costume prejudging work?

When to arrive

You are expected to be at the prejudging location 10 minutes before your timeslot.

Duration

Prejudging duration is 8 minutes per team.

Props

If you have props, there will be a space in the prejudging room to rest them while you talk through your costumes.

Have any questions?

Please reach out to us at cosplay@overload.co.nz