



**Media Release**  
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## **Quality assurance system builds momentum in tourism industry**

New Zealand tourism's official quality agency has reached a milestone with 1000 tourism businesses now signed up to the Qualmark™ licensing system.

The Royal Albatross Centre in Dunedin has been named the 1000<sup>th</sup> business to join New Zealand's official quality assurance system.

Qualmark Chairman David Wilks says that this shows that businesses are increasingly realising the value of the Qualmark™.

"It doesn't matter if the tourism business is an international icon brand or a small, independent operator – as long as they have aspirations to continually improve their business they are eligible to apply for a Qualmark™ licence," he says.

"Businesses use the licensing process as a 'blueprint for success' in tourism and as a way of finding out how they can improve their business practices to deliver outstanding visitor experiences and to operate more smartly to stay in the game."

George Hickton, Chief Executive of Tourism New Zealand says that the number of businesses that are joining up to Qualmark is good news for the New Zealand tourism industry.

"Quality is very important to New Zealand's ideal visitor," he says. "The number of businesses that are joining Qualmark reinforces New Zealand's value as a tourism destination for this group of people."

David Wilks says that reaching the milestone is a great addition to the achievements of the year, which have included the development of the Qualmark brand, the introduction of the Guest & Hosted accommodation category to cater for B&B style accommodation and the launch of the endorsement category for tourism businesses, such as adventure activities, cultural and nature experiences and transport.

The quality endorsement system sits alongside Qualmark's star grading system for accommodation which includes five accommodation categories each with their own star grading assessment system.

There are currently around 950 accommodation and other tourism businesses that have been through the assessment process and been licensed to use the Qualmark™ official mark of quality. Around 50 other businesses, including the Royal

Albatross Centre, are currently going through the assessment process and working towards their Qualmark™ star grade or endorsement.

Manager of the Royal Albatross Centre Sam Inder says that the quality assessment of his business helped him take an objective view of their current systems and identify areas for improvement that would have the most benefit to the Centre and their customers.

“The greatest benefit of the assessment process was the review of the processes and systems we use. While these systems have served us well over the years, we now have had the opportunity to check them against the best business practices and evolve them accordingly,” says Mr Inder.

“The Qualmark assessment also drew our attention to some weakness and duplication in our booking process and as a result we are now bringing forward the introduction of an electronic booking and point of sale system. We feel that all of these outcomes that resulted from our assessment will really strengthen our business operation.”

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