



# Enviro Awards FAQ

Below is a list of questions and answers about the Enviro Awards programme and responsible tourism criteria. If you have any further queries, please email [enquiries@qualmark.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@qualmark.co.nz) or freephone 0800 QUALMARK.

## **Why did Qualmark introduce environmental criteria into its assessment system?**

The New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015 reinforces that at an industry level the country needs to demonstrate it is as environmentally sustainable as possible. Environmental content has been included in Qualmark's assessment programme since 2002. Funding for the extension and development of these criteria was announced in August 2006. Qualmark Green was unveiled to the tourism industry by the Minister of Tourism on 27 May 2008.

## **Can Qualmark tell me exactly what I need to do to get an Enviro Award?**

Enviro Awards foster and reward innovation - recognising businesses that work effectively to reduce their main environmental impacts. The assessment process tells businesses how they are performing in Responsible Tourism criteria, rather than prescribing specific actions. Businesses determine for themselves the best course of action to take once they have feedback.

Clearly there are many options for reducing energy consumption or making a difference through conservation activities and Qualmark provides information on where to get good advice.

## **What help can I get to better understand the Enviro Awards process?**

The Qualmark Responsible Tourism Guide has a lot of useful information about what your business can do to be eligible to apply for an award. It is also full of useful links to organisations that can assist you on your sustainability journey.

If your business is in one of the regions with Sustainable Tourism Advisers in Regions (STAR) advisers, you may also wish to contact them and see if you are eligible to use their services.

### **Why aren't all Enviro Awards given at assessments?**

With one set of criteria across a diverse range of businesses types, it has been important to ensure consistency through an additional review and benchmarking process for first time applications.

Bronze and Silver awards are re-confirmed at assessment for businesses which have previously been granted awards, provided they continue to show evidence of performance and improvement. Gold awards require external review following assessment.

With Gold applications increasingly strong every year, an extra level of scrutiny ensures the programme continues to recognise excellence and businesses showing innovation.

### **What is the role of the Enviro Award panel?**

The role of the panel is to look at the impact of the initiatives, based on the list given and information from the assessor – not gather further information.

### **I've met the criteria at my assessment – why didn't I get an award?**

The Responsible Tourism score determines the award you are eligible to apply for - not the award you receive.

### **I had the required number of actions on my initiatives list – why was my application unsuccessful?**

Awards are given to businesses with actions that together effectively reduce environmental impact – not according to the number of actions.

### **How can a small action, like turning down a thermostat, be worth as much as a solar water heating system supplying all our hot water?**

It may not, which is why the panel and assessor don't just add up the number of initiatives. It's the impact of the action that matters, relative to the size of the business.

### **How do I know what initiatives count in my application?**

Every action listed adds strength to an application, as the panel recognises businesses for what they are doing as a whole. It is important to list all actions with a positive environmental impact - even those you consider simply best practice. They ALL count toward your award application.

### **Why did I score lower in Responsible Tourism this year, when I have the same actions in place?**

Applications are stronger every year and it is important to progress with your action plan, and show ongoing commitment to reducing environmental impacts.

This ensures businesses with Enviro Awards continue to meet growing consumer expectations of what an environmentally accredited business should be doing.

**Do I need to supply monitoring in Qualmark's format?**

You may supply monitoring in your own format; what is important is that the business is monitoring in the way most relevant e.g., energy or water use by guest night, in appropriate unit of measure, rather than a simple monthly bill.

**My business collects rainwater and is not on a town supply – why should I monitor water?**

Choose the most relevant monitoring for your business, which may not be water, as it is important to monitor main environmental impacts and resource use.

**Are applications put together by consultants more likely to get an award?**

While it is important that the extent of your measures is communicated clearly in the initiatives list, this has been achieved by over 400 businesses, with relatively few applications submitted by businesses hiring consultants. Examples of successful applications are on the website.

**How does environmental criteria contribute to my overall quality score?**

Environmental practice is part of the overall Qualmark assessment. For accommodation and venues, 5% of the total; for visitor activities, services and transport, 8% of the total. Qualmark will review the weightings over time, in line with visitor expectations of environmental issues.

**Why this particular weighting?**

Whilst some businesses are already adopting sustainability practices to help protect our environment, others have not. We recognise that initially this issue may challenge some operators. Qualmark is aiming to provide those businesses with the resources and support to build up this aspect of their business and get some improvements underway.

**What does our business have to do, as a minimum?**

International visitors expect to be able to recycle their rubbish, and providing them with this option is an important minimum requirement. Another is to complete a checklist (such as the Responsible Tourism Checklist provided in the guide) to have a good look at your business and find out where improvements can be made. We know that not every area offers recycling, and you won't be penalised if this holds true for your region. However, we'll encourage you to reduce your amount of waste by following the tips in the information provided in the Responsible Tourism Guide.