

MEDIA RELEASE



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From ocean depths to mountain highs – top tourism businesses celebrate being green

Four of the country's tourism businesses are celebrating their environmental leadership as the first visitor activity and transport operators in New Zealand to achieve Qualmark's new Enviro-logo.

To date the first visitor activity and transport operators who are recipients of the prestigious new environmental rating from Qualmark are Dive! Tutukaka in Northland, Treble Cone in Wanaka, Real Journeys in southern New Zealand, and Johnston's Coachlines operating nationwide.

Dive! Tutukaka, New Zealand's premier full-service dive charter operator servicing the Poor Knights Islands, has been awarded an Enviro-Gold logo. Treble Cone, the largest ski and snowboard area in the South Island, and Queenstown-based Real Journeys have received Enviro-Silver logos. Johnston's Coachlines, a four-and five-star tour coach operator operating in Auckland, Christchurch and Queenstown, has received an Enviro-Bronze logo.

Tourism Minister Damien O'Connor congratulated the four tourism businesses for their leadership in achieving the logos.

"This is a fantastic achievement for four New Zealand businesses taking the lead in environmental sustainability. As it is our environment that underpins our 100% Pure brand, we need to take credible and visible steps to reduce our environmental impact and improve our environmental management. These businesses are doing just that and I encourage other tourism operators to get on board and strive to achieve the Qualmark Enviro-logo."

Geoff Penrose, Chief Executive of Qualmark, said the four businesses are demonstrating how environmentally responsible activities can be integrated into the experiences they offer.

“The very nature of these tourism operations means they are offering services within the pristine New Zealand outdoor environment. This adds additional expectations in terms of sustainability and each of these businesses has far exceeded these environmental requirements.

“These Enviro-logos are evidence that each has achieved the pinnacle of responsible tourism processes within their respective operations,” said Mr Penrose.

“On behalf of Qualmark, I extend my sincere congratulations to the operators and management teams of each of these businesses.”

Mr Penrose said announcement of the first Enviro-logos in the visitor activities and transport category marks a significant milestone for the Qualmark Green programme, which was unveiled by the Minister of Tourism in May 2008 as an extension and enhancement of environmental criteria in Qualmark’s quality accreditation system.

“New Zealand is the first country to have a fully integrated quality and environmental performance tourism assurance system. The industry has responded positively to the initiative with many more operators aiming to achieve recognition in coming months for their efforts through the Enviro-logos,” he said.

“Feedback from our first Enviro-logo recipients confirms that good business practices can result in actions that are also good for the environment.”

From August this year, all tourism businesses with a Qualmark are having their environmental performance assessed as part of their overall quality assessment. After scoring well in the Responsible Tourism Operations criteria, operators are eligible to apply for an Enviro-logo: Enviro-Gold, Enviro-Silver or Enviro-Bronze. Further Enviro-logos will be awarded as more Qualmark businesses are assessed.

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For more information:

Visit www.qualmark.co.nz

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Background information on the first Enviro-logo recipients (visitor activities and transport providers)

Dive! Tutukaka

Operating from their Northland base, and working in the pristine Marine Reserve at the Poor Knights Islands, Dive! Tutukaka provides an excellent example of true commitment to environmental sustainability. Dive! Tutukaka was a founding member of the Northland Sustainable Tourism Charter and is a recognised PADI Go-ECO-Operator. The measurement of the carbon footprint of the operation with a view to carbon reduction and offsetting is re-invested in the local community. With pending World Heritage status at the Poor Knights, other initiatives include full training of staff to include environmental and conservation messages in their interaction with customers; collection of rainwater for washing all equipment; full recycling bins on boats with all

organic waste either composted using Bokashi or collected by a local pig farmer; as well as sustainable fleet management, and monitoring fuel efficiency systems on each boat. Dive! Tutukaka also sponsors Northland's EMR (Experiencing Marine Reserves) which is a marine education programme working with schools nationally, is a participant in Marine Mammal Medic training with Project Jonah and works closely with DOC in the maintenance of the marine reserve. The community initiatives and support of local people and businesses include close links with the schools, sponsorship of the local volunteer coastguard. "Mostly it is about believing in what you are doing, and believing in doing it right."

Kate Malcolm, Manager, Sales and Marketing, Dive! Tutukaka and Perfect Day, Phone 64 9 4343 867, Mobile 0274 174 191, kate@diving.co.nz, www.diving.co.nz

Treble Cone

As the largest ski area in the South Island, Treble Cone demonstrates its green philosophy throughout its business operations. Key initiatives include the achievement of excellent power savings through staff education and the monitoring of CPD periods; fuel savings through the management of load on generators and management of staff transport fleet; separation of all recyclables on site, including glass, card, cans and plastic collected from public areas; encouragement of customers to car share and reduce drag on their vehicles by removing roof racks; the ongoing pickup of rubbish in winter and 2-3 days after the snow melts; conservation of water during the snow-making process through the use of snow-making ponds and drawing from reservoirs; use of biodegradable consumables in the cafe including cutlery, cups, plates and napkins; and the issue to all staff of sustainable bags and thermal mugs to reduce plastic and plastic cup use.

Jackie van der Voort, Ski Area Manager, Phone 64 3 443 7443 ext 702, Mobile +64 21 431 689 vdvoort@treblecone.com, www.treblecone.com

Real Journeys

As tourism and sightseeing excursion operators within the pristine environment of Fiordland, Queenstown and Stewart Island, Real Journeys' commitment to environmental practices is evident across the business. Key initiatives include the building of a UV sewage treatment plant in Doubtful Sound that all operators can use; speed restrictors on most vessels to maintain efficient speed; the use of more modern vessels made from aluminium to reduce weight and associated fuel consumption; fitting of water dispensers on all vessels to avoid the need for bottled water; the re-use of waste engine oil from vessels to heat the Te Anau workshop; the purchase of products in bulk where possible and in returnable packaging; and disposal of all food scraps by either feeding to pigs or using in compost at Walter Peak High Country Farm.

Real Journeys marketing communications manager Diana McCurdy, Ph: 03 442 4830 dmccurdy@realjourneys.co.nz, www.realjourneys.co.nz

Johnston's Coachlines

Operators of a sizeable 93-vehicle fleet, Johnstons have a number of the latest Euro 5 compliant coaches, and have adopted a range of fuel-saving initiatives. These include a limited road speed and cruise control and automatic idle switch off. Johnstons is also taking part in a Ministry of Transport research trial focussing on operator commitment to fuel efficiency initiatives in the New Zealand Heavy and Light commercial vehicle fleets with specific emphasis on driver training and some fleet management activities. Vehicle washing focuses on the efficient use of water, using environmentally conscious cleaning products, and stopping the run-off from entering the storm drain system.

Johnston's Coachlines General Manager Rob Simpson, Ph: 09 255 1144, rob.simpson@johnstons.co.nz, www.johnstons.co.nz

Qualmark® Environmental performance standards and branding

Once operators have met minimum requirements, additional scoring in the Responsible Tourism Operations criteria will contribute to their overall Qualmark score. Qualmark is working on a range

of activities that will promote and leverage this aspect of the Qualmark criteria, including marketing communications and website information. Part of this work has included the development of additional branding (logos) available to operators to score above 3 out of 5 in the criteria. There are three levels of logos for this (shown alongside the existing Qualmark identity as an example):



Example only - the three levels of Qualmark's environmental verification are shown above. Based on scoring a certain level within the Responsible Tourism Operations criteria, these logos are available to operators once they are assessed from August 2008. The relevant logo is designed to be used alongside (not in place of) existing Qualmark star grading and Endorsed logos on websites and in collateral such as brochures.

Electronic versions available for media on request.

Operators who score above 3 out of 5 in the criteria are eligible to apply for the use of the Enviro-Bronze logo; those that score 4 out of 5 can apply for use of the Enviro-Silver logo; and the highest performers (achieving 5 out of 5) can apply for the use of Enviro-Gold. The logos have been tested on international visitors staying in a range of accommodation categories.

About Qualmark

Qualmark is New Zealand tourism's official mark of quality. All accommodation and tourism businesses that carry the Qualmark means they've been independently assessed as professional and trustworthy, so travellers can book and buy with confidence.

The Qualmark can help travellers identify quality places to stay, things to do and ways to get around no matter where you are in New Zealand. From the North Island to the South Island, Auckland to Christchurch, Rotorua to Queenstown, Wellington to Dunedin – Qualmark® assured businesses can be found across the country.

Qualmark is jointly owned by Tourism New Zealand and the AA.