

Media Release
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Heritage & Character Inns seventh chain to fully commit to tourism's official quality programme

Heritage & Character Inns has become the seventh leading accommodation marketing group or chain to fully commit to tourism's official quality licensing system, and the second to sign up in the past 6 months.

Qualmark chief executive Fiona Luhrs says the Heritage & Character Inns group's commitment to the quality assurance programme has helped establish a very solid foundation of properties in the new Guest & Hosted star grading category launched in July.

"Members of the Heritage & Character Inns group played a very supportive role in the development of the Guest & Hosted star grading system. They recognise, as do many others in the B&B and boutique accommodation sector, that star grades are recognised and highly valued by the free independent traveller coming from overseas.

"We had anticipated around 120 Guest & Hosted properties would join the system in its first year but in the first five months of the system 75 properties have already signed up. Around 35 of those properties are from the Heritage & Character Inns group and the rest of their 70 properties will join over the next 18 months."

Ms Luhrs says the range of star grades for properties assessed to date has also been very pleasing, with a good spread across the 3 to 5 star bands, and the first 2 star plus property assessed in the past fortnight. "Not every traveller wants to stay in five star properties, so it's very important that the star grade programme can provide a full range of options."

Seventh accommodation chain

Ms Luhrs says Heritage & Character Inns commitment to have all its member properties join the Qualmark™ programme means that each of the quality assurance system's categories now has at least one market leading chain or group.

Earlier this year Mainstay New Zealand Hotels committed its 40 properties to the system, joining the Heritage Hotels group in that category. The AA Tourism Host and Golden Chain motel groups provide a solid foundation in the Self Contained & Serviced category, while YHA Hostels and Top 10 Holiday Parks are fully committed to the Backpackers and Holiday Park categories respectively.

“The full commitment of these chains to the Qualmark™ system is mutually beneficial,” says Ms Luhrs. “Independent star grading enables the chains to confirm and demonstrate their market position, better manage the quality of service they deliver, and provide quality assurance for travellers and wholesalers. In return, the commitment of these leading groups sends a strong message that independent quality assurance is important for travellers, accommodation providers and the tourism industry as a whole.”

ENDS

Qualmark™ star grade category	Fully committed chains/groups
Backpackers	YHA Hostels
Guest & Hosted	Heritage & Character Inns
Holiday Park	Top 10 Holiday Parks
Hotel	Mainstay New Zealand Hotels Heritage Hotels
Self Contained & Serviced	AA Tourism Host Golden Chain