

## INDUSTRY BACKS QUALMARK CHANGES

There's been strong industry support for Qualmark's announcement this week that it's to streamline some of its processes. A review of the quality assurance scheme has been underway since April, after research found the "by industry, for industry" accreditation model needed improvement. The proposed initiatives include tailoring the assessment process for accreditation, simplifying the Enviro responsible tourism awards process and amending the Qualmark logo to improve recognition. The specifics have yet to be determined and further consultation is expected.

Tourism Industry Association Chief Executive, Tim Cossar, says the changes will keep the quality assurance scheme relevant. "Like any other business, quality systems need to adapt and respond to market needs. These changes will ensure Qualmark stays relevant to tourism operators and meaningful to travellers."

There's been good consultation according to Motel Association Chief Executive, Michael Baines. "We're delighted that Qualmark has listened to the Motel Association, and pleased with the direction it has chosen to take. I think the outcome of this will be fantastic and it'll add significant value to the quality assurance programme."

Qualmark Board Chair, David Wilks says licence holders can expect to see improvements to the assessment process. "Industry told us, one size definitely does not fit all in terms of assessments and we're acting on that to deliver greater value to licence holders, travellers and shareholders."

There was universal agreement that the Enviro awards system could be improved. With 2,300 licence holders now assessed for their level of sustainability, Wilks says the process can be more straight forward in future.

The quality mark itself has been another aspect under review. Qualmark will be looking to differentiate the symbol according to accommodation type and clearly demonstrate that it lends official status to the businesses which carry it.

Shareholders Tourism NZ and the Automobile Association have renewed their support and are keen to see operational efficiencies. David Wilks says the new initiatives will be rolled out over the coming months. "I'd like to personally thank the many licence holders and tourism organisations who've collaborated so closely with us. We look forward to talking further as we determine the specifics and deliver on the initiatives industry has proposed."

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For further information please contact David Wilks, Qualmark Board Chairman. Tel 64-21-895-228  
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**About Qualmark** Qualmark NZ is a joint venture company held in 60% ownership by Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) and 40% by the Automobile Association (AA). They've been funding the scheme since its inception in 1993. Its objective is to assess businesses against agreed standards so that licence holders can promote themselves as being trusted providers of quality services. Currently 2,300 businesses are Qualmark licenced and nearly 600 have received Enviro sustainability awards.