

MEDIA INFORMATION

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Successful Accommodation Businesses Demonstrate Quality Focus

The focus on quality among New Zealand's Tourism Award winning accommodation businesses is showing the way for the industry as a whole, according to Qualmark Chief Executive Officer, Fiona Luhrs.

The winners in all Tourism Award categories for which Qualmark provides gradings are Qualmark licencees. And all are absolutely focused on delivering a high-quality experience for their guests that is consistent with the Tourism Strategy 2010, says Ms Luhrs.

Those winners were the Anchor Inn, Kaikoura (Motels, Motor Inns, Motor Lodges and Mid Range Hotels category and Visitor Accommodation and Transportation major category); Kaikoura Top10 Holiday Park (Holiday Park category); Sheraton Auckland Hotel and Towers (Major Hotels and Resort Hotels Category) and Stonehurst, Christchurch (Backpacker Accommodation category).

Anchor Inn Proprietor, Murray Arnst says he and wife Phillipa have used Qualmark systems extensively from the outset of their new business in 1997 to keep pace with customer expectations and build repeat business.

"We've made about a dozen improvements to our rooms to make them better for guests as a result of Qualmark guidelines and suggestions from guest feedback sent to us each month by Qualmark. That includes things like putting in full length mirrors and ironing boards, right through to identifying plumbing problems," says Murray

The 15 unit Anchor Inn motel is one of only 14 5-star Qualmark graded motels in the country.

Kaikoura Top 10 Holiday Park proprietors Gerald and Lynn Nolan have been Qualmark licencees since shortly after the system's inception in 1994 and believe a key benefit is being able to benchmark against others in the industry. "An annual, independent assessment gives us the ability to see where we might not be meeting expectations, and how we compare with other parks around the country. That's been very valuable as we've worked through our 10-year plan for developing the park." The Nolan's property has a 4 star holiday park grading and 3 star motel facilities.

In the backpacker category, Stonehurst proprietor, Russell Glynn, says independent quality assessments are fundamentally important in attracting attention from overseas wholesalers, particularly when visitor expectations are always increasing. "A few years ago power steering was an added extra in a car, today it's standard equipment. The same's true in the accommodation business. Keeping step with visitor's expectations, and having an independent Qualmark endorsement of the quality we deliver is key."

Ms Luhrs says the Tourism Strategy 2010 throws down the challenge to all accommodation providers to enhance the quality of visitors' experiences, in the way that these Tourism Award winners are doing.

Qualmark has been identified by the Tourism Strategy Group as the organisation that will drive the investigation, development and implementation of quality standards for all tourism operators.

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For more information please contact:

Qualmark New Zealand Limited
Freephone: 0800 Qualmark (0800 782 562)
Email: enquiries@qualmark.co.nz