

Media Release  
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## **Cross section of tourism businesses selected for quality endorsement pilot**

Tourism's new official quality endorsement programme is to be put through its paces with a diverse group of 30 tourism businesses from across the country.

The 30 are part of Qualmark's pilot programme starting this week, which is one of the final step to test "user acceptability" and refine the assessment systems before launching the official tourism endorsement to the market in October.

Qualmark chief executive, Fiona Luhrs, says the guinea pig businesses are being asked to complete the full application and assessment process, and undergo a research interview to get detailed feedback on the system from an operator's viewpoint.

"The pilot participants provide a really useful cross section of businesses of different sizes, offering different experiences, in different parts of the country, and for different types of customers. A key goal is to ensure that the systems developed in consultation with a range of tourism sectors will be appropriate for all of these different circumstances."

Ms Luhrs says a final, month-long round of consultation on the endorsement system's assessment criteria is also starting this week, involving relevant industry and sector groups, and operators involved in the development of the Quality Tourism Standards through the Tourism Industry Association.

The endorsement system is based on a detailed assessment of the areas of a business that affect the quality of the experience they deliver. From October, businesses seeking the official endorsement will need to meet all minimum requirements and achieve a pre-determined score in order to pass the assessment and be licensed to use the industry's quality mark – the new fern-based Qualmark™.

The need for the Qualmark endorsement system was identified in the national tourism strategy last year and funding for the project was announced by the Government in January.

The goal is to have more than 3,000 tourism businesses licensed to use the Qualmark™ logo within 3-4 years, including both star graded accommodation and other tourism operations brought into the programme with the new endorsement system.

“It’s not just for an elite few. It’s to identify a broad range of well run business that can be relied upon to deliver a professional service, so travellers can make smart choices about where to stay and what to do.”

Qualmark Endorsement pilot participants are:

<b>Business name</b>	<b>Business type</b>	<b>Location</b>
4Track Adventures	All terrain vehicles	Auckland
All track Adventures	All terrain vehicles	Wellington
Criffel Peaks Safaris	All terrain vehicles	Wanaka
Taupo Quad Adventures	All terrain vehicles	Taupo
Sky City	Attraction	Auckland
Agrodome	Attraction	Rotorua
Kelly Tarltons	Attraction	Auckland
Hanmer Springs Thermal Reserve	Attraction	North Canterbury
International Antarctic Centre	Attraction/retail	Christchurch
Maori Treasures	Attraction/Maori	Lower Hutt
Pride of Auckland	Charter boat	Auckland
Caprice Yacht Carters	Charter boat	Auckland
Abel Tasman Aqua Taxi	Charter boat/ferry	Motueka
Black Cat Group	Charter boat/ferry	Christchurch
Pakiri Beach Horse Rides	Horse trek	Wellsford
Alpine Horse Safaris	Horse trek	North Canterbury
Cape Farewell Horse Treks	Horse trek	Collingwood
Marsden Hall Antiques	Retail	Taupo
Simply New Zealand	Retail	Auckland
Simply New Zealand	Retail	Christchurch
The Kauri Museum Souvenir shop	Retail	Matakohe
Great New Zealand Shop	Retail	Rotorua
Natural High	Sea kayak	Nelson
SoundsAir	Tourist flight	Picton
Wanaka Flightseeing	Tourist flight	Wanaka
Glenorchy Air	Tourist flight	Queenstown
Wings over Whales	Tourist flight	Kaikoura

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