

Media Release
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New Zealand's official quality assurance system expands to cater for event and conference centres

Qualmark – New Zealand tourism's official quality assurance agency – has launched a new quality assurance system to cater for venues.

The new Venue assessment and grading system means that venues throughout New Zealand can now benchmark themselves against industry standards and use the system to enhance their business to deliver an improved service to customers.

A full range of New Zealand's venues can apply for a Qualmark™ licence as part of the new quality assurance system, including convention and event centres, sports stadiums, municipal halls, indoor arenas and other meeting or entertainment venues.

The new Venue assessment and grading system is based on the existing Hotel assessment system, except instead of looking at bedrooms, meeting spaces are assessed. As with hotels, venues will receive a star grade to provide customers with an accurate indication of the level of services and facilities on offer.

Qualmark chief executive Fiona Luhrs says the "Venue" system has been introduced in response to feedback from the industry and particularly, the Entertainment Venue Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) – the membership body that facilitates the sharing of venue management and marketing skills information.

"This system has been developed in direct response to a need identified by EVANZ to be able to benchmark their product against official industry standards and to be able to enhance their offering through a robust and independent assessment system," says Ms Luhrs.

General Manager of Wellington Convention Centre, Neville Brown, who is also an active member of EVANZ, worked with Qualmark to develop the new system and says that quality assurance in this area is essential as venue hirers are becoming more discerning in terms of the quality of facility that is being offered to them.

"The venue system aligns this industry with a measurement system that many customers are familiar with and the rating approved for each venue will clearly define the expected level of service to be received," says Mr Brown.

"Equally the assessment will demonstrate to all venues what is required to maintain their allocated star grading and aspire to the next. This alone is an important component and internal discipline in improving the quality of venue services available to customers throughout New Zealand."

Over the past few months, trials of the system have been carried out at a variety of venues throughout the country including Auckland Showgrounds, Christchurch Convention Centre and Rotorua Convention Centre.

General Manager of Event Venues - Rotorua, Nick Dallimore, who took part in the trial says he found the assessment process helpful by providing a fresh perspective on things they are doing well and areas for improvement.

“The assessment put focus on some of the very simple things about the way in which we present and carry out our day to day business operations. The new system gives us a tangible tool to highlight the need for new capital investment or asset maintenance and provides a benchmark to ensure professionalism within our industry that can be understood by our customers.”

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Notes to editor

The Qualmark™ is New Zealand tourism’s official quality mark and is backed by Tourism New Zealand, New Zealand Automobile Association, Tourism Industry Association and other leading industry organisations.

Qualmark licences accommodation and tourism businesses to use the Qualmark™. Eligibility is determined by an onsite assessment and ongoing customer feedback. The assessment takes the form of a star grading system for accommodation businesses and a quality endorsement system for other tourism businesses, such as visitor activities, attractions and transport.

Qualmark acts as a service to the tourism industry, assisting operators to improve business practices and their delivery of visitor experiences. It is the way the industry directs travellers to quality assured products and services. Currently over 1000 accommodation and other tourism businesses are part of the Qualmark™ licensing system.

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