

Media Release
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Golf courses tee off for Qualmark endorsement

The country's top championship and resort golf courses are set to be on a par with the world's leading golfing facilities thanks to a set of national quality standards that have been introduced to raise the golfing experience for international visitors to New Zealand.

The national quality standards for golf courses are part of the Qualmark™ endorsement programme – a system introduced by the tourism industry in October last year to provide quality assurance for tourism businesses, such as adventure and leisure activities, cultural and nature experiences and transport.

To gain their Qualmark™ endorsement, golf courses will undergo an assessment using criteria developed with the industry and based on research into what visitors want. They will also be assessed against golf specific criteria to ensure they are meeting quality standards pertinent to golf courses and golfers.

Qualmark – New Zealand tourism's official quality agency, has been working in close conjunction with a group of the country's top golf courses and golf associations – known as the New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster – to develop these golf specific criteria.

New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster

New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster was formed in May 2003 to grow the "golfing visitor" market in New Zealand and position New Zealand as a unique golf destination offering a wide range of courses and terrain.

The Golf Tourism Cluster is partially funded by Trade and Enterprise New Zealand with other members funding the balance of activities. Golf courses that are part of the Cluster include Millbrook Resort in Queenstown, Taupo Golf Club, Clearwater Resort and Terrace Downs High Country Resort in Canterbury, Wairakei International Golf Course near Taupo, Gulf Harbour outside of Auckland and Kauri Cliffs in Northland.

In addition to the leading golf courses and resorts, other members of the Cluster include New Zealand Golf Association, New Zealand Professional Golfers Association, Air New Zealand, Tourism Holdings Ltd, Montana and leading specialist golf distributors in New Zealand and overseas.

New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster manager, Geoff Burns, says that the quality endorsement of golf courses belonging to the Cluster will help ensure that they deliver on promises made as part of their international marketing campaigns.

"The golf course assessment system will be used to help differentiate the standards of the country's top resort courses and give a standard for all the championship golf

courses to reach to be marketed overseas as the best available in New Zealand,” says Mr Burns.

“The Qualmark™ endorsement will become a requirement of belonging to the New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster to ensure standards are high – particularly from an international visitor perspective.”

The Qualmark™ endorsement process

The golf course assessment criteria that the Cluster golf courses must undergo in order to gain their Qualmark™ endorsement, look at a full range of requirements pertinent to championship golf courses. For example, courses must be able to confirm that they are of sufficient standard for holding championship events, that they are professionally designed, maintained and resourced and that the New Zealand Sports Turf Institute undertake course quality monitoring on a regular basis.

Qualmark chief executive Fiona Luhrs says she expects that approximately 30 of New Zealand’s resort and championship golf courses will go through the assessment process to become quality endorsed as a “visitor activity.”

“The criteria have been designed to bring our diverse, but high quality, top golf resorts and courses in line in terms of their facilities, maintenance programmes and customer service, in order to meet the expectations of domestic and international golfers who increasingly view New Zealand as a world class golfing destination.

“The Qualmark™ endorsement will help improve the capability of New Zealand golf operators to ensure the provision of a quality golf experience for first time or repeat visitors to New Zealand.”

Around 1000 accommodation and other tourism businesses are currently licensed to use the Qualmark™ official mark of quality to help travellers identify professional and trustworthy places to stay, things to do and ways to get around so they can book and buy with confidence.

For more information visit www.qualmark.co.nz

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For further information please contact:

Leanne Swann
Communications Manager
Qualmark New Zealand Ltd
Phone: 09 377 7142
Mobile: 021 660 171
Email: leanne@qualmark.co.nz

Geoff Burns
Manager
New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster
Phone: 0274 582 832
Email: geoff@fernmade.co.nz