

MEDIA RELEASE

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OPERA HOUSE AN ENVIRO AWARD FIRST

Just three months after it's elevation to a 5 star Qualmark rated conferencing and events venue, the Hawke's Bay Opera House has become the first venue in New Zealand to be granted a Qualmark Environmental Award.

The business achieved an Enviro-Silver award this week, by meeting Qualmark environmental criteria, covering all aspects of sustainable business practice, from community involvement, to water, energy and waste efficiency.

The awards recognise innovation and success in reducing environmental impact, and venues are required to submit policy and procedural information as well as monitoring and measurement data.

Hawke's Bay Opera House general manager Roger Coleman says the Qualmark Enviro – Silver award recognises the commitment of the Hawke's Bay Opera House team to sustainable business practice.

"The Qualmark Enviro-Silver award reaffirms the Hawke's Bay Opera House commitment to providing the people of Hastings and the wider Hawke's Bay region with a performing arts and conference facility of national significance".

Over 400 Enviro Awards now recognise tourism businesses for the work they are doing to reduce environmental impacts and Qualmark chief executive, Geoff Penrose, says the Opera House has shown leadership in their sector.

"Hawke's Bay Opera House has put effective initiatives in place and is monitoring to ensure they are working towards a successful outcome, both for the business and the environment," says Mr Penrose.

Since August 2008, the environmental performance of all tourism businesses with a Qualmark has been assessed under Responsible Tourism Operations criteria as part of on-site quality assessments. Businesses performing well in reducing environmental impact in five key action areas (energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, community activities and conservation initiatives) are eligible to apply for an Enviro-Gold, Enviro-Silver or Enviro-Bronze Award.

The initiative, referred to as Qualmark Green, was unveiled to the tourism industry by the Minister of Tourism on 27 May 2008. The introduction of the Responsible Tourism criteria marked a 'world first', with New Zealand being the first country to have a fully integrated quality and environmental performance tourism assurance system.

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Qualmark

- Qualmark® is New Zealand's trusted guide to quality travel experiences - helping travellers identify over 2,300 great places to stay, things to do and ways to get around.
- Accommodation, activities and transport businesses carrying the Qualmark® logo have been independently assessed to meet tough quality standards and environmental criteria - earning New Zealand tourism's official quality mark.
- Over 400 businesses have achieved Enviro Award status - recognising their commitment to Qualmark's responsible tourism criteria and environmental practices.
- Qualmark is jointly owned by Tourism New Zealand and the New Zealand Automobile Association. The programme is run as an industry service, on a not-for-profit basis.