



## **Media Release**

Wednesday 09 November 2005

# **1500<sup>th</sup> QUALITY OPERATOR RECOGNISED IN THE FAR NORTH**

**New Zealand's 1500<sup>th</sup> Qualmark® licence holder was recognised at a ceremony held at Rawhiti Marae in the Bay of Islands yesterday (Tuesday 08 November).**

Cape Brett Walkways was awarded their Qualmark® Endorsed Visitor Activity certificate by Qualmark New Zealand Chief Executive, Geoff Penrose, making them the 1500<sup>th</sup> licence holder for the organisation in New Zealand.

The event was attended by representatives from tourism related organisations including Tourism New Zealand, Destination Northland, Te Tai Tokerau Tourism and Department of Conservation. It was hosted by Cape Brett Walkways, the iwi of the Rawhiti Marae and Trustees of the Cape Brett land.

Qualmark New Zealand is the tourism industry's official quality agency providing quality assurance for businesses throughout New Zealand. Cape Brett Walkways offers walkers access to 16 km of tracks on the Cape Brett peninsula. They negotiated exclusive access to this *Rakaumangamanga* track with the Maori Trust and Department of Conservation.

The recently appointed Minister of Tourism, Hon Damien O'Connor said "It's important for New Zealand to offer quality product experiences for all visitors. Cape Brett Walkways have shown their commitment to quality by achieving this Qualmark. My congratulations to all involved in the business".

This Qualmark® has been awarded in the fastest growing sector of endorsements. In the past year endorsement licences have increased by over 20%. Endorsements are licences that apply in the areas of activity, transport and services. Qualmark New Zealand also has an aligned system for assessing accommodation.

Earlier this year a collaborative approach between Qualmark New Zealand and DOC resulted in a more efficient application process. “Cape Brett Walkways are one of the first businesses to be assessed using our refined safety criteria”, says Geoff Penrose. Simplified criteria and a more streamlined approach means that DOC concession holders, such as Cape Brett Walkways, only need to fulfil one set of criteria to meet both agency’s needs. “This means that tourism businesses don’t have to duplicate their efforts”, adds Geoff Penrose.

According to Gary Hoosen from Cape Brett Walkways, “The Qualmark process was really beneficial for our business and helped ensure that all areas of our operations have been assessed against similar products nationwide. As we come into the busy summer months this certainly reinforces our goal of providing a quality operation for our visitors.”

Cape Brett Walkways is associated with Kiwi Eco Tours who also became a Qualmark® licence holder today. Both companies are owned and operated by the same principals, with Kiwi Eco Tours providing water based tours and transport throughout the Bay of Islands. “Kiwi Eco Tours effectively became our 1501 licence holder!” concludes Geoff Penrose.

## **ENDS**

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For further information on Cape Brett Walkways visit [www.capebrettwalks.co.nz](http://www.capebrettwalks.co.nz)*