

MEDIA RELEASE



For immediate release
12 March 2010

TOP 100 QUALMARK GREEN TOURISM BUSINESSES

Qualmark's list of tourism's top environmental performers hit the 100 mark this week.

The 100th Enviro-Gold Award is an important milestone, highlighting the success of the Qualmark Green programme, according to Qualmark chief executive, Geoff Penrose.

"What we are seeing at from these businesses is a long term view of sustainability and the value of caring for the environment and their community," says Mr Penrose.

Despite launching Qualmark Green at a time when many tourism businesses were struggling, the commitment to the programme is clearly evident, with over 470 businesses now recognised with Enviro-Gold, Silver or Bronze awards.

Ascot Park Hotel, who scooped the 100th Enviro-Gold award, is one of many good examples of businesses showing vision and leadership, says Mr Penrose.

Ascot Park Hotel Manager, Peter Ridsdale, says the hotel has travelled a long way in two years and will continue working toward a sustainable business.

"I'm very pleased we started this journey and the team and I are proud of what we have achieved so far," says Mr Ridsdale.

With potential savings of up to \$17,000 per annum identified through an energy audit and about six tonnes of waste now recycled monthly, rather than going to landfill, there are clearly benefits for both the business and the environment, he says.

Since August 2008, the environmental performance of all tourism businesses with a Qualmark has been considered 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 criteria used to assess environmental performance marked a 'world first', with New Zealand being the first country with a fully integrated quality and environmental performance tourism assurance system.

The Enviro logo is a useful guide for the increasing number of travellers wishing to limit the environmental impact of their tourism experiences.

Ends

For more information contact:

Simon Claridge, Communications Manager, Qualmark New Zealand.
Ph +64 9 377 7153, Mob +64 27 687 8993, simonc@qualmark.co.nz
www.qualmark.co.nz

About 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 470 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.