

**Media release  
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## **1200 quality tourism businesses to choose from**

As the numbers of Qualmarked™ businesses grow, New Zealand now offers buyers a comprehensive choice of quality assured visitor experiences up and down the country.

“Having 1200 businesses licensed to use the Qualmark™ - New Zealand tourism’s official quality mark, is an outstanding achievement,” says Fiona Luhrs, Qualmark Chief Executive.

“It not only shows the value and relevance of the programme, but also the commitment from tourism operators to deliver world class visitor experiences.”

In a year since TRENZ 2003 Qualmark™ licence holders have grown nearly 50% from around 800 to 1200 and Qualmark expects this number to grow a further 29% in the next 18 months to the end of 2005.

“We aim to have around 1550 licence holders by the end of 2005,” says Ms Luhrs

“The largest areas of growth are anticipated to be Guest & Hosted and Self Contained & Serviced accommodation and the Visitor Activity segment.”

The Qualmark licensing system is the mechanism that ensures what is promised by Tourism New Zealand’s international marketing campaigns actually matches the product that is delivered.

Essentially, Qualmark gives peace of mind that products and services that carry the Qualmark™ are professional and trustworthy. It shows that each business has been independently assessed to the extent that they meet the expectations of international visitors in areas such as customer service, facilities and equipment, people management, general safety and welfare, and overall business practices.

This is of particular importance for tour operators and buyers from the Japanese and European markets, where intermediaries are operating within strict consumer legislation and regulation, and are held accountable should anything go wrong during their clients’ holidays.

Quest Travel is one of the UK’s leading independent long haul travel specialist and has recognised the value of the Qualmark™.

“From a consumer perspective, we believe that the Qualmark™ adds value through providing reassurance of the quality of the product that is being purchased,” says Dave Simmons, Managing Director, Quest.

“This is particularly important for purchase decisions relating to small/independent operators where quality consistency can otherwise be somewhat variable.

“Whilst Quest Travel considers it to be a key role of our business to ensure the product we present is appropriate for our clients, the Qualmark™ simply serves to endorse these product selections.

“Ultimately, this will help to ensure our clients have the best possible holiday experience in New Zealand, which at the end of the day is our primary objective.”

Extending beyond accommodation and developing an endorsement system gives international buyers an even greater number of quality products to choose from. In addition to accommodation, virtually any kind of tourism business can now be part of the Qualmark licensing system - from museums to horse trekking, art galleries to wildlife encounters, rental vehicles to mountain biking, and gardens to shopping!

“Qualmark is world leading not only in terms of being the only independent organisation which assesses and grades tourism businesses, but also because of the breadth of businesses that are catered for. And, by being all under the one brand, it’s easy for visitors to recognise,” says Ms Luhrs.

“There is no other licensing system in the world that can assess such a wide range of tourism businesses. Qualmark ensures that tourism businesses meet and hopefully surpass any expectations held by visitors.

“The Qualmark™ means reassurance.”

## **ENDS**

\*\*A full list of Qualmark™ licence holders can be found at the back of this pack.

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