

Media Release
25 May 2004



Golf, gardens and venues are now eligible for New Zealand tourism's official quality mark

Tee-off on a quality assured course

The standard of the New Zealand golfing experience for international visitors will be raised over the next few years as the country's premier golf courses become quality assured as part of the Qualmark™ licensing system – New Zealand tourism's official quality assurance system.

The new assessment system for golf courses has been developed over the last twelve months in conjunction with the New Zealand Golf Association (NZGA), the New Zealand Professional Golfers Association (NZPGA) and the New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster – the organisation responsible for marketing the “Best of Golf New Zealand” as unique golf experiences.

“Our goal is to raise the standards and the awareness of the New Zealand golfing experience and to deliver on our marketing promises as the “Best of Golf New Zealand “. The Qualmark™ endorsement is helping us achieve this,” says New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster manager, Geoff Burns.

Golf courses are assessed against the criteria used to assess all tourism businesses that are part of the Qualmark™ licensing system. This criteria looks at six quality areas including customer service, safety and welfare, staff management, cultural and environmental aspects, facilities and equipment and general business practices.

In addition, golf courses are also assessed against a set of golf-specific criteria, which look at a range of aspects specific to golf courses such as club-house facilities, practice facilities, golf carts, maintenance plans, turf management and more.

Mr Burns says that the main objective of the golf assessment system is to ensure the consistent delivery of world class experiences across all internationally marketed golf courses, in order to satisfy the most discerning golfer.

“New Zealand has a number of challenging courses in superb locations. The Qualmark™ system intends to promote the diversity under the framework of a high standard of customer offering to meet international expectations in terms of facilities, maintenance programmes and customer service.”

It is envisaged that 10 courses will be part of the system by the end of the year.

Qualmark plants its roots in garden sector

In March this year Qualmark launched a new quality endorsement for gardens in conjunction with the New Zealand Gardens Trust (NZGT). The NZGT is sponsored by the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture and was set up in 2002 to promote excellence in the New Zealand garden sector and to present gardens as a product to the visitor market.

To be eligible for a Qualmark™ endorsement, gardens must first be members of the NZGT and be assessed and graded by the body as a 'Garden of National Significance' or a 'Garden of Regional Significance'. Qualmark then assess the gardens using the criteria used to assess all tourism businesses.

NZGT spokesperson Bryan Gould says the NZGT and the Qualmark™ assessment systems complement each other well.

"We were aware that we were only assessing the garden itself, and not the business and visitor service that underpins it. The Qualmark™ system does this for us," he says.

Since the launch of the dual assessment system in March, the Waitangi Treaty Grounds – a NZGT 'Garden of National Significance' - was the first garden to be endorsed by both the NZGT and Qualmark. Many more gardens are anticipated to be assessed by Qualmark and the NZGT in the future.

Venues now eligible for Qualmark™ star grade

A star grading assessment system for venues was launched in November 2003, and applies to a diverse range of New Zealand's venues including convention and events centres, performing arts venues, sports stadiums, municipal halls, indoor arenas and other meeting or entertainment venues.

The new system was developed with the Events and Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) – the membership body that facilitates the sharing of venue management and marketing skills information.

"This system was developed in direct response to a need identified by EVANZ to be able to benchmark their product against official industry standards and to be able to enhance their offering through a robust and independent assessment system," says Ms Luhrs.

Since its launch six venues have been graded or are awaiting assessment.

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Jane Gower
Communications Manager
Qualmark NZ Ltd.
Phone: (09) 377 7142
Mobile: 0274 660 171
Email: jane@qualmark.co.nz
Website: www.qualmark.co.nz

Fiona Luhrs
Chief Executive
Qualmark NZ Ltd.
Phone: (09) 377 7143
Mobile: 0274 937 835
Email: fiona@qualmark.co.nz
www.qualmark.co.nz

Bryan Gould
New Zealand Gardens Trust
Phone: 06 759 6087
Mobile: 0274 744 961
Email: gouldb@npdc.govt.nz

Geoff Burns
Manager
New Zealand Golf Tourism Cluster
Phone: 09 521 1566
Mobile: 0274 582 832
Email: geoff@fernmade.co.nz