

Media Release
Tuesday 25 May



Quality call for international buyers

Reassurance is the key benefit that the Qualmark™ provides, and this has now been recognised internationally, with overseas travel trade using Qualmark™ licence holders in their itineraries and brochures.

Chief Executive, Fiona Luhrs says that by using Qualmark™ licensed New Zealand suppliers in their itineraries and brochures, international tour operators will build their reputations as credible suppliers of New Zealand product. And many already are.

Tour operators recognising the value of the Qualmark to date include Quest Travel (UK), Beacon Holidays (India), Outdoor New Zealand Holidays (USA) and the New Zealand Adventure Company (USA).

Qualmark has called for all international buyers attending TRENZ to use the Qualmark™ when planning New Zealand itineraries and brochures.

“What the Qualmark™ quality assurance system offers international tour operators is peace of mind and reassurance. Peace of mind that the operator is reputable, professional and trustworthy, and reassurance that the operator is serious about the international market and will provide an experience that will meet or exceed expectations,” says Ms Luhrs.

There are around 1200 tourism businesses in New Zealand that are currently licensed to carry the Qualmark™ mark of quality. Qualmark Chief Executive Fiona Luhrs says it is a sign that buyers can trust.

“The Qualmark™ quality mark means that operators have had an onsite visit from an experienced and knowledgeable assessor. And it means that the business has passed a very rigorous assessment which looks at all aspects of the experience, from customer service right through to safety and facilities,” says Ms Luhrs.

Leading UK tour operator uses the Qualmark™ in their brochure

Quest Travel – one of the UK’s leading direct sell tour operators that specialises in long haul travel to New Zealand – has incorporated the Qualmark™ in its 2004 consumer brochure.

“We believe including the Qualmark™ in our brochure enhances our positioning as genuine New Zealand specialists, providing a real point of differentiation with other competitors,” says Quest Travel managing director, Dave Simmons.

“From a consumer perspective, we believe that the Qualmark™ adds value by providing reassurance of the quality of the product that is being purchased. This is particularly important for purchase decisions relating to small or independent operators where quality consistency can otherwise be somewhat variable. 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.”

Wally Stone, Tourism New Zealand Chairman, says that the inclusion of the Qualmark™ in the Quest brochure is a great step forward for New Zealand's marketing efforts in such an important market.

"Quality standards are very important to our international visitors. The UK is our second-largest market in terms of visitor arrivals, so to be able to offer UK travellers this form of quality assurance plays an important part in helping to ensure they have an exceptional experience in New Zealand," he says.

Inbound tour operator uses the Qualmark™ too

Qualmark is also receiving significant uptake by domestic travel and tourism businesses. Inbound tour operator ATS Pacific, has included the Qualmark™ and identified their Qualmark™ licensed suppliers, in their 2004/05 Travel Trade Planner.

ATS Pacific Managing Director Stuart Neels, says that the inclusion of the Qualmark™ in their publication gives his team reassurance that the quality of service their suppliers offer is high.

"Qualmark is offering a consistent quality assurance programme for our industry, which our clients and travellers to New Zealand can rely on. There is increased international confusion regarding star ratings for tourism services, and Qualmark have provided a New Zealand benchmark which we can confidently refer to," he says.

Ms Luhrs says that the support of Quest and ATS is a sign that travel businesses around the world want to ensure they are providing quality services.

"The Qualmark™ provides tour operators with a robust and trustworthy system that they can count on to assist their clients in selecting and selling quality New Zealand product," she says.

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