

Media Release
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Anchor Inn of Kaikoura is inaugural winner of Mark of Quality award

A five star Kaikoura motel is the inaugural winner of Qualmark's 'Tourism Mark of Quality' award presented at the prestigious New Zealand Tourism Awards held in Queenstown last night.

"Anchor Inn has received consistently outstanding customer feedback for providing consistently exceptional experiences to their guests," says Qualmark chief executive Fiona Luhrs.

"This new award, sponsored by Qualmark, recognises a tourism business which excels in providing customer satisfaction - the ultimate measure of a quality visitor experience. It reflects Qualmark's key objective of working with operators to enhance their product offering and build New Zealand's reputation as a world class visitor destination."

The independent judges, appointed by the New Zealand Tourism Industry Association, took into consideration how well operators' business practices were aligned with Qualmark's values and code of ethics. They also looked for evidence of high levels of achievement in the delivery of customer satisfaction and evidence that the operator consistently provides a "wow" factor to delight their customers and to exceed expectations.

To be eligible to win the inaugural Qualmark award, businesses had to be Qualmark licence holders at the time of the judges' site visit. This year 14 out of the 26 businesses selected for a site visit, and **8 out of the 13 businesses that won awards last night, are Qualmark licensed or currently going through the licensing process.**

For Anchor Inn, the award is all the more remarkable in that the motel was established only five years ago and is a three time New Zealand Tourism Award winning property which changed hands just a year ago. Ms Luhrs said the ultimate test of their systems and processes was that the exceptional business and customer service practices established by the founders were continued on by the new owners "with not a ball being dropped in the management changeover".

"The feedback from Anchor Inn's guests over the past year was just outstanding. Time and time again judges read that they continually go the extra mile for their customers, how thoughtful their service was and that the hosts were genuinely lovely and helpful people with whom to spend a few days," adds Ms Luhrs.

The winners received a stunning pounamu trophy carved by world renowned jade sculptor Ian Boustridge of Greymouth's Jade Boulder Gallery.

Tourism Industry Association chief executive, John Moriarty commented: "This year's Awards drew interest from a really exciting group of tourism businesses who have made a solid investment in business excellence. It is also pleasing to see a rise in Qualmark's profile amongst entrants. The bar is clearly rising every year and TIANZ is pleased to acknowledge Qualmark's and Tourism New Zealand's support of the New Zealand Tourism Awards."

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Note to editors

The Qualmark™ is New Zealand tourism's official quality mark and is backed by Tourism New Zealand, New Zealand Automobile Association, Tourism Industry Association and other leading industry organisations.

Qualmark licences accommodation and tourism businesses to use the Qualmark™. Eligibility is determined by an onsite assessment and ongoing customer feedback. The assessment takes the form of a star grading system for accommodation businesses and a quality endorsement system for other tourism businesses, such as visitor activities, visitor attractions and visitor transport.

Qualmark provides a service to the tourism industry, working with operators to improve business practices and enhance delivery of visitor experiences. It is the way the industry directs travellers to quality assured products and services.

For more information visit www.qualmark.co.nz, www.anchor-inn.co.nz or www.jadeboulder.co.nz.

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