

MEDIA RELEASE



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High five for first five Enviro-Gold recipients

Five of the country's tourism businesses have received top accolades as the first accommodation providers in New Zealand to achieve Qualmark's new Enviro-Gold logo.

Recipients of the new environmental rating from Qualmark include the Bolton Hotel (Wellington), The Langham, Auckland (Auckland), The Hermitage Hotel (Mt Cook), Novotel Capital Wellington (Wellington) and Birds Ferry Lodge (West Coast).

Tourism Minister Damien O'Connor congratulated the five accommodation providers for their Enviro-Gold logos.

"I encourage other tourism operators to get on board and aim for excellence in environmental sustainability. Qualmark has always been the sign of quality in New Zealand tourism and I encourage tourists, both international and domestic, to look for the Qualmark Enviro logo when choosing where to stay," he said.

Geoff Penrose, Chief Executive of Qualmark, said the five accommodation providers had demonstrated their commitment to the highest level in environmental practices to achieve the country's first Enviro-Gold logos.

"This achievement is testament to how each of these properties has fully integrated environmental sustainability into quality tourism products. These Enviro-Gold logos are evidence that each has achieved the pinnacle of responsible tourism processes within their respective operations," said Mr Penrose.

"On behalf of Qualmark, I extend my sincere congratulations to the operators and management teams of each of these properties."

Mr Penrose said announcement of the first Enviro-Gold logos marks a significant milestone for the Qualmark Green programme, which was unveiled by the Minister of Tourism in May 2008 as an extension of environmental criteria in Qualmark's quality accreditation system.

“New Zealand is the first country to have a fully integrated quality and environmental performance tourism assurance system. The industry has responded positively to the initiative with many more operators aiming to achieve recognition for their efforts through the enviro logos,” he said.

“Feedback from our first Enviro-Gold logo recipients confirms that good business practices can result in actions that are also good for the environment.”

Mr Penrose said that each of the accommodation providers awarded the first Enviro-Gold logos demonstrated some unique environmental practices.

From August this year, all tourism businesses with a Qualmark are having their environmental performance assessed as part of their overall quality assessment. After scoring well in the Responsible Tourism Operations criteria, operators are eligible to apply for an enviro-logo; Enviro-Gold, Enviro-Silver or Enviro-Bronze. Further enviro logos will be awarded as more Qualmark businesses are assessed.

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For more information:

Visit www.qualmark.co.nz

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Background information on the Enviro-Gold recipients (accommodation providers)

The Hermitage Hotel

Located in a World Heritage National Park area, The Hermitage Hotel provides an excellent example of true partnership between the Department of Conservation (DOC), the community and a large hotel established in a highly sensitive environment. Notable sustainability practices include a separator to remove any chemicals from the coach (tour bus) wash run-off; the provision and servicing of recycling stations for the whole Mount Cook village; the sending of all food waste to a dedicated compost maker in Twizel; and the collection of all cooking oil by DOC for conversion into bio diesel for their fleet.

General Manager - Denis Callesen, 64 27 434 6492, dc@hermitage.co.nz
Jen Andrews - Southern PR, 63 3 441 1117, jen@southernpr.co.nz

The Langham, Auckland

The Langham is a five star hotel with 410 rooms, 16 function rooms and two ball rooms located in central Auckland. It is a large accommodation and conference provider, actively demonstrating commitment to reducing its footprint across the operation. Key initiatives being managed by the hotel include management plans and initiatives to reduce the consumption of water, energy and waste going to landfill. The hotel has also introduced an impressive array of baling machinery to process a full range of recyclables including turning styrofoam into blocks. Ink cartridges are returned to suppliers to be refilled, cardboard coat hangers are now being supplied to guests and clients for valet. State of the art Lexus hybrid vehicles provide a fitting luxury experience in an eco-

friendly manner; and a weta sanctuary to educate guests about New Zealand's unique biodiversity adds another exciting touch to the hotel's endeavours.

The Langham was the first hotel to be awarded Green Globe certification in New Zealand. It has been further recognized with the Ministry for the Environment's Green Ribbon award in June for 'business making a difference' along with taking out tourism's top sustainability award at the TIANZ Awards in August. The hotel's success comes from its holistic management approach, passion and understanding that 'together we can all make a difference'.

Rachel Broadmore, Marketing Communications Manager, The Langham, Auckland, 64 (0) 9 300 2817, 64 (0) 275 476 335, rachel.broadmore@langhamhotels.com

Bolton Hotel

Key outcomes of the Bolton Hotel's commitment to environmental practices is evident at all levels across the property's water, energy and waste management. These practices extend to providing guests with recycling options in rooms; change to energy saving lighting throughout the hotel; a linen and towel change card with savings donated to selected charities and not-for-profit organizations; changes and monitoring of settings of mechanical plant to reduce energy use and the replacement of all laundry bags with bio-degradable options.

Kylie Nicholson, Business Development Manager, Bolton Hotel, 64 4 462 3783, kylie.nicholson@boltonhotel.co.nz

Novotel Capital Wellington

The Novotel Capital Wellington, a member of the Accor group, demonstrates a strong commitment to the group wide strategy on sustainable development. Initiatives in place across the Novotel's operations extend to free valet parking for guests driving hybrid cars and a national contract with Green Cabs; low energy lighting in the majority of the building; Key cards in the rooms to turn off electricity (or specify lights, TV, and heating) when room is not in use; dual flush toilets and water saving shower heads; a fully paperless check in process; the annual planting of trees as part of World Earth Day, and use of paper products (e.g. office paper, toilet paper) made from certified sustainable sources. The hotel also has Green Globe certification.

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Birds Ferry Lodge

As a lodge on the South Island's West Coast, Birds Ferry Lodge has been committed to the highest in environmental practices for a number of years. This commitment is far reaching across the operation and includes initiatives such as the heating of water on demand to avoid storage requirements; line drying of all laundry; the growing of many vegetables within the grounds; collection of all rain water for general use; recycling of all food waste for either chicken food or as compost; the collection of coffee grounds from the local café to use as garden mulch and in compost; and providing local bee keepers with access to the property's land to keep hives, in exchange for honey.

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Qualmark® Environmental performance standards and branding

Once operators have met minimum requirements, additional scoring in the Responsible Tourism Operations criteria will contribute to their overall Qualmark score. Qualmark is working on a range of activities that will promote and leverage this aspect of the Qualmark criteria, including marketing communications and website information. Part of this work has included the development of additional branding (logos) available to operators to score above 3 out of 5 in the criteria. There are three levels of logos for this (shown alongside the existing Qualmark identity as an example):



Example only - the three levels of Qualmark's environmental verification are shown above. Based on scoring a certain level within the Responsible Tourism Operations criteria, these logos are available to operators once they are assessed from August 2008. The relevant logo is designed to be used alongside (not in place of) existing Qualmark star grading and Endorsed logos on websites and in collateral such as brochures. Electronic versions available for media on request.

Operators who score above 3 out of 5 in the criteria are eligible to apply for the use of the Enviro-Bronze logo; those that score 4 out of 5 can apply for use of the Enviro-Silver logo; and the highest performers (achieving 5 out of 5) can apply for the use of Enviro-Gold. The logos have been tested on international visitors staying in a range of accommodation categories.

About Qualmark

Qualmark is New Zealand tourism's official mark of quality. All accommodation and tourism businesses that carry the Qualmark means they've been independently assessed as professional and trustworthy, so travellers can book and buy with confidence.

The Qualmark can help travellers identify quality places to stay, things to do and ways to get around no matter where you are in New Zealand. From the North Island to the South Island, Auckland to Christchurch, Rotorua to Queenstown, Wellington to Dunedin – Qualmark® assured businesses can be found across the country.

Qualmark is jointly owned by Tourism New Zealand and the AA.