

MEDIA RELEASE



25 February 2009

Quality assured visitor guide takes guesswork out of travelling

The inaugural Qualmark 2009 New Zealand Travel Guide has just been printed and is soon to be distributed throughout the country.

The guide makes it easy for travellers to identify quality assured accommodation options according to the star grading they are looking for, and to choose quality visitor activity, transport and service experiences.

“As the guidebook only includes Qualmark assured tourism businesses, this is a ‘first’ for New Zealand visitor information resources. It means that visitors on the look out for a free guide book with a wide range of quality assured places to stay, things to do and ways to get there need look no further,” said Qualmark Chief Executive Geoff Penrose.

Qualmark is New Zealand’s official mark of quality in tourism. With a print run of 15,000, and at over 900 pages, the guidebook features a useful page marker with the star grading explanation for accommodation properties, regional information, city and town directories, maps and the AA’s popular 101 Must-Do’s and Must-Do Weekends.

Peter Blackwell, General Manager – AA Tourism, said that the publication of Qualmark only rated businesses is complementary to the existing range of AA travel guide and map publications.

“As a joint owner of Qualmark, the AA’s support for the guide reflects our commitment to industry-wide quality service standards, an integral component of delivering a truly satisfying and memorable experience. AA is pleased that our publishing expertise could be used to enhance Qualmark’s offering to licensees,” he said.

The vision for the publication is that it is the definitive visitor resource for quality tourism businesses in New Zealand, with the credibility and assurance of the Qualmark brand standing behind all the properties and experiences featured within it.

Tourism New Zealand chief executive George Hickton said the size of the guide demonstrated the sheer number of New Zealand tourism businesses providing quality assured experiences.

“We know our international visitors are more satisfied with their experiences when they use Qualmark-rated businesses and this guide will ensure New Zealand remains highly competitive on the international stage as a high quality destination. This travel guide will prove to be a useful tool for both international and domestic travellers,” Mr Hickton said.

In addition to being provided to the i-SITE visitor information network, Tourism New Zealand has an international distribution plan under way for the guides.

Planning for the guide's second edition is underway, and this will include the new Qualmark Green enviro-logos alongside star grading and endorsement logos.

"This means that travellers will also be able to easily identify top-performing environmentally conscious tourism experiences, from backpackers, to luxury lodges, and a range of visitor activities and transport providers that are proactively and effectively managing their impacts on their environment," said Mr Penrose. "There are currently over 70 tourism businesses that have achieved Qualmark Enviro-Bronze, Enviro-Silver or Enviro-Gold recognition."

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Background information on 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.

www.qualmark.co.nz

Background information on AA

The New Zealand Automobile Association is an incorporated society with over one million members. It represents the interests of road users who collectively pay over \$2 billion in taxes each year through fuels excise, road user charges and GST.

www.aa.co.nz