

MEDIA RELEASE



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First enviro logo goes to tourism hotspot

Rotorua, one of New Zealand's tourism hotspots, can attest to being the first region to boast a tourism business with a Qualmark enviro logo.

Alpin Motel, which is 100% New Zealand owned and operated, has been awarded a Qualmark Enviro-Silver logo.

Tourism Minister Damien O'Connor congratulated Alpin Motel for their Qualmark Enviro logo, the first business to acquire the new rating.

"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.

Chief Executive of Qualmark, Geoff Penrose, said Alpin Motel is the first to receive such an accolade.

"Congratulations go to owners Steve and Gillian Osborne, whose business is a great example of how environmental good practice can be integrated into quality tourism products."

Mr Penrose went on to say that industry has responded positively to the initiative so far, with many operators already aiming to achieve recognition for their efforts through the enviro logos.

Alpin Motel's Enviro-silver logo will be displayed alongside their Qualmark self contained and serviced 4 star quality assurance logo. The accommodation provider is part of the Host Accommodation Group.

Steve Osborne of Alpin Motel says that going through the Qualmark Responsible Tourism Operations criteria confirmed that good business practices can result in actions that are also good for the environment.

“There have been costs associated with change but good collaboration between landlord and tenant was necessary for long term planning.”

These actions include the installation of a down bore heat exchanger that provides heated water for guest rooms and hot tubs. This is an ongoing trial and is joint venture with Environment Bay of Plenty.

“From recycling, to having mountain bikes for guests, a ring main hot water system, replacing single serve toiletries with dispensers... we have tried to integrate environmental benefits into our whole business, through our guest communications, refurbishment programme, staff cleaning practices and waste management,” said Mr Osborne.

“Over and above this, sustainability is a ‘whole of life’ philosophy for us. If you take care of your own environment, it is easy to extend the philosophy to include your immediate surrounding environment and those that use it. That’s why we have looked beyond the boundary of our motel and are working on initiatives like supporting the preservation of the character of the neighbouring Redwood Forest for recreational purposes.”

Qualmark Green is the enhancement and extension of environmental criteria in Qualmark’s quality accreditation system. This means that now all Qualmark assessments include Responsible Tourism Operations criteria. The introduction of the criteria marked a ‘world first’ when it was unveiled to the tourism industry by the Minister of Tourism on 27 May 2008.

From August this year all tourism businesses assessed by Qualmark have had their environmental performance verified by Qualmark. Alpin Motel is one of these, and after scoring well in the Responsible Tourism Operations criteria the Osbornes then applied for the Enviro-silver award. More awards will be made as more assessments take place. High performers will be eligible to apply for the use of a logo that represents three levels of environmental performance – Enviro-Gold, Enviro-Silver and Enviro-Bronze. There are currently another ten applications for enviro logos being reviewed by Qualmark, and more expected as more assessments are carried out.

For more information:

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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, operators can apply to use the applicable logo 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.

Background 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.