

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## Hawke's Bay Opera House Gets Five Stars

The Hawke's Bay Opera House has confirmed its status as one of New Zealand's best conferencing and event venues.

After just six months as a stand-alone company the Opera House has been awarded a five-star rating from Qualmark - an independent assessment organisation whose ratings are internationally acknowledged as the standard for event venues.

Last year the Opera House was assessed by Qualmark for the first time and received a four-star rating, with assessors noting at the time the venue only just missed out on 4.5 stars.

Two Qualmark assessors visited the Opera House last week to review everything from general business practices to the presentation of the building, interviewing management staff and examining procedures.

Opera House board chair, John Buck, says this brilliant result sees the Opera House join just three other five-star venues in New Zealand, two of which are in Hawke's Bay - Black Barn's River Room, The Old Church and the Wellington Convention Centre.

Mr Buck says moving from a council-managed facility to a stand-alone company has enabled the Opera House to operate as a business in a very competitive commercial environment.

The assessors made it clear that increased resources and operational efficiencies made possible under the new company structure had contributed heavily toward the five-star rating.

"Hastings councillors deserve credit for allowing the Opera House to make that move and the Opera House team has achieved some great things as a result.

Opera House General Manager, Roger Coleman, says this is a fundamental step in building the Opera House brand.

"This venue has cemented itself as an event destination for the people of Hawke's Bay and now this Qualmark rating will allow us to develop our reputation as a nationally-renowned performing arts and conferencing venue."

"Five-stars is a remarkable achievement for the Opera House staff and they are to be congratulated on setting up top-level systems and making the Opera House the success it is.

Hastings Mayor Lawrence Yule says two years on from the refurbishment Hawke's Bay people clearly love the Opera House and this five-star Qualmark rating confirms that it is an international standard complex.

"This is also a reward to all those people who contributed, financially and through moral support, to the Opera House refurbishment. They did that to make Hastings a better place and the rewards are coming quickly.

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## **For more information**

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