

PRESS RELEASE

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BUG's new star ratings make choosing a hostel easy

New Zealand is blessed with some of the world's best backpackers' hostel but like anywhere else there are a few dodgy ones, which make choosing somewhere to stay an important issue for backpackers. Fortunately the new star rating system in the BUG travel guidebooks makes choosing a hostel easy.

Last year's BUG Australia travel guide highlighted the best hostels in each destination; however BUG's managing editor, Tim Uden, felt that this wasn't good enough and set out to devise a better system. "Highlighting the best hostel in each town was a good idea, but it didn't give a true indication of how good the hostel was and it didn't give credit to some excellent hostels that were the only hostel in town" says Tim. "We wanted to provide the most comprehensive resource that could quickly describe a hostel while also providing more in depth information than any other travel guidebook. To achieve this we set about creating our own star rating system that highlighted what is important to backpackers".

The BUG star ratings were developed from the ground up as a hostel rating (rather than an adaptation of a hotel or motel rating), virtually every hostel in each destination is rated and the BUG score is divided into categories so budget travellers can see how the overall score is awarded. Unlike other star rating systems, hostels don't choose to be rated and BUG doesn't make them pay for a rating or give them advance warning that a reviewer is coming.

Many travellers notice large discrepancies between the standards of star rating systems around the world and this can make it difficult for travellers to rely on ratings when choosing a place to stay. For instance the Scottish Tourist Board regularly awards hostels with one or two stars, but New Zealand's Qualmark and Australia's AAA Tourism rarely award a hostel with less than three stars.

BUG uses the same criteria to rate hostels regardless of where they are in the world. No other hostel rating system has the same international consistency and travellers can be confident that a 3½ star hostel in Barcelona will offer a similar standard of accommodation as a hostel in Wellington that has the same BUG star rating.

Currently BUG has rated around 1500 backpackers' hostels and youth hostels in 12 countries. BUG has high standards with the average hostel scoring an overall rating of 2½ stars and so far not a single hostel has been deemed good enough to get five stars, although a few have come close.

New Zealand has fared very well with 30 hostels scoring four stars or higher including two 4½ star hostels.