



NEWS RELEASE

THURSDAY 6th SEPTEMBER 2007

WALKWISE PROGRAMME NAMED FINALIST IN AWARDS

'Walking the talk' is how Armourguard Security describes its Walkwise programme which has been named a finalist in the New Zealand Community Safety and Injury Prevention Awards.

Armourguard Security National Manager for Manned Services and Cash Collections, Mark O'Brien, said the Walkwise service, which forms part of the organisation's suite of Wise Group services, is a safety ambassador programme that focuses on reducing anti-social behavior and crime in central city areas.

"Among other things, Walkwise offers a helpful and friendly alternative to traditional law enforcement and provides a highly visible presence that deters crimes such as graffiti and vandalism," Mark said.

"It has a proven track record of success in Wellington and Manukau where each initiative has been developed alongside local councils, community groups and the New Zealand Police to suit the specific requirements of each city."

Walkwise ambassadors are positioned in central city areas, to provide a helpful and approachable alternative to law enforcement and other security enforcement options.

"Ambassadors don't enforce the law, but instead work with local councils, community groups and the NZ Police to create safer cities."



Officers are required to wear vivid yellow and black uniforms in order to stand out on the streets.

The programme has already been successful in the Wellington central city area, where it has been operating since 2001.

“The introduction of the officers in Wellington was largely the result of a visit to the USA by Wellington City. It was noted during their overseas visit that a number of major cities had successful safety officer programmes in place.”

The 24-strong team currently patrols the central city 24 hours per day, discouraging crime and anti-social behaviour.

“Ambassadors are briefed to carry out a diverse range of tasks such as escorting women home at night and reporting potential dangers that could impact adversely on members of the public such as broken streetlights and potholes in the road,” Mark said.

“To date, the team has already assisted the community and visitors in finding missing persons and aided Police with their duties in making Wellington a safer city.”

The Walkwise team in Wellington report around 80-100 incidents each week – approximately half of which are reported to Police, and the remainder to local councils.

“The organisation also constantly monitors and assesses ways through a variety of different channels, of improving on existing services and meeting emerging needs within the community.



“Public survey results have reinforced the success of the Walkwise programme in increasing a ‘feeling of safety’ in central Wellington.”

The programme proved to be so successful in Wellington that it was later adopted by other City Councils.

“Through our Walkwise programme, Armourguard believes that is able to offer a unique programme that is flexible enough to meet the specific requirements of cities regardless of what those needs are.”

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For further information contact:

Christine Meads

Whole Nine Yards PR

P: 09 578 0782

M: 027 294 0823

E: Christine.meads@xtra.co.nz



Background

Amourguard Security Ltd is a division of ADT Security, the world's largest electronic security company. The organisation has accumulated over 100 years experience in the provision of security solutions to more than eight million residential, commercial and retail customers worldwide. Products include alarm systems and integrated security applications, as well as Armourguard Security Ltd's core manned services offerings including guards and patrols, and cash carrying.

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