

June 2008

To whom it may concern

My full name is Andrew Douglas Roberts and I hold the position of Area Manager for the Southern Islands Area in the New Zealand Department of Conservation. The team of 27 staff that I manage are responsible for the day to day management of Rakiura National Park (Stewart Island), as well as the Ulva Island Marine Reserve and six large islands that are Nature Reserves in the Southern Ocean. I have been employed by the Department of Conservation in conservation and recreation management roles for the last 27 years and I have international experience in threatened species and offshore island management.

I have worked with Peter Garden on a number of conservation related projects since 1988. I have worked with Peter Garden in four different roles. Firstly I had contracted his services as a helicopter pilot transporting staff and supplies with his helicopter in previous years. I have worked with Peter in Search and Rescue operations where his skills have been used to both carry out aerial searches for missing people as well as positioning search crews on the ground in very rugged terrain. Peter has considerable experience as a search and rescue pilot in very rough conditions. I have worked extensively with Peter in helicopter operations where toxic bait has been spread by air to eradicate pests from offshore islands. Peter applies meticulous attention to planning and to the detail of the field operations. Peter works extremely closely with the conservation rangers to ensure a successful outcome. I also work with Peter on the Forest Hill Foundation, a private conservation trust which aims to fence off a reserve and eradicate all of the pests from inside the reserve and then reintroduce threatened species to the reserve.

The significance of Peter's aerial bait spreading work on offshore islands is that he can be regarded as the leading pilot internationally in this field. He has more experience in helicopter spreading of bait than any other pilot in the world and the success rate of his projects is outstanding. The practical skills and experience that Peter brings to a project and can share with staff is unrivalled. The most important factor that he brings is one of attitude: he is totally aware that in order to achieve 100% eradication of rats from islands that a lethal dose of bait has to be deposited in each rats individual territory and he is able to devise ways of achieving this. Peter is also very good at passing on his skills to other pilots, he has often worked as the lead pilot when multiple helicopters are used in a bait spreading operation.

In conclusion I have no hesitation in recommending Peter Garden as a helicopter pilot of the highest calibre, he has extensive mountain flying experience. It is in the area of pest eradication that Peter has built up an international reputation and is regarded as the best helicopter pilot to use when considering pest eradication on offshore islands.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Roberts
Area Manager – Southern Islands
Department of Conservation