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Bio-Protection
Bioprotection science for New Zealand

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Dear Joanne

Shona Sam – Māori Youth Hikoi to Bioneers Conference 2008

I am pleased to be able to provide a reference for Shona. I have known her for at least three years and our main contacts and collaboration have come from her work as a research assistant on a FRST-funded programme which I manage. This entitled: Biodiversity, ecosystem services and sustainable agriculture. The programme has two objectives: Objective 1: Economic value of ecosystem (nature's) services in three agricultural sectors. Objective 2: Enhancing ecosystem services in three sectors through "ecological engineering". Shona's work was entirely in Objective 2 and in this she excelled. Most of her responsibilities concern one sector, horticulture, specifically viticulture and she was Project Manager for the "Greening Waipara" programme (<http://bioprotection.org.nz/sustainable-bioprotection>). In this programme, Shona's responsibilities encompassed a wide range of activities, including liaison with up to 50 winegrowers, transport and logistics for planting programmes, coordinating maintenance and protection against grazing of the plantings, organising hui and workshops, supervising labour teams of up to 14 people etc. A key part of Greening Waipara is its kaitiakitanga aspect. More than 25,000 native plants have been returned to vineyards and other properties in the Waipara Valley. Many of these plants deliver nature's services to the properties. These services include such things as biological control of pests, weeds and diseases; enhancing pollinators; capturing carbon from the atmosphere; improving soil quality, aesthetics; conservation and eco-tourism. The latter aspects reflect kaitiakitanga and Shona worked hard to make sure this important aspect of restoration ecology in this country was captured. She did this by designing signage, leaflets, newsletters etc as well as contributing to websites.

I was very impressed to Shona's commitment throughout her time with us. She is a natural leader and coordinator and her presence really lifted the programme to another level. I commend her on her recent embarking on a PhD programme and strongly recommend her as a participant in the Youth Hikoi.

Yours sincerely

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