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**Dr Peter Weston**

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**Re-Nomination of Dr Colin Bower for the R.D. Fitzgerald Trophy**

Dear Peter

I am delighted to write this letter of support for the nomination of Dr Colin Bower for the R.D. Fitzgerald Trophy. I understand that this award is presented 'from time to time by the Ira Butler Trophy Committee for major contributions to the advancement, conservation or propagation of Australian orchid species'.

Col is an exceptional entomologist and botanist who has combined these skills with his love and fascination of Australian terrestrial orchids. His superb photography further enables him to freely share his enthusiasm for orchids with the public in popular articles and presentations.

Over many years, Col has devoted hundreds of hours of his spare time each season to the study of the pollination of Australia orchids, with a special emphasis on the sexually deceptive orchids that exhibit extraordinary diversity in Australia. During this work he has documented with extreme care the relationships between orchids and their specific pollinators. Consequently, he has undoubtedly uncovered the pollinator of more orchids than anyone else in the history of Australia orchidology. Along the way he has discovered many new species of pollinators as well as some new species of orchids.

Col's research has gone well beyond the mere discovery of the species involved in the partnership between orchid and pollinators. He has also experimentally evaluated the degree of pollinator specificity and explored the likely evolutionary processes involved in orchid speciation. The high calibre nature of this research is evident by his multiple scientific papers in the *Australian Journal of Botany*. He is also a co-author on additional papers published in high profile international scientific journals.

From a more personal perspective, I am indebted to Col for his ground breaking field-based studies that have underpinned my own multidisciplinary research program on the evolution and conservation of Australian terrestrial orchids. My international research program in this field would certainly not have been possible without the background knowledge discovered by Col. It is also remains a great privilege to have Col as an ongoing collaborator and co-author. I look forward to many more years of interaction in this capacity.

In conclusion, I support in the strongest possible way this nomination of Col for the R.D. Fitzgerald Trophy.

Yours sincerely,

Rod Peakall (30-4-2010)