

# Environmental awards given out at ceremony

**A PIONEERING** helicopter pilot, a group of muttonbirders, a community-minded business and an environmentally aware school were the winners at this year's Southland conservation awards.

The Department of Conservation awards evening was held last night at the Elmwood Gardens Function Centre.

Helicopter pilot Richard Hayes won the Real Journeys Services to Conservation Award for a raft of activities, including sponsoring conservation projects, search and rescue, involvement in deer management and deer removal.

Mr Hayes also donated time and helicopter use to stoat control in the Worsley and Castle Valleys in Fiordland National Park, which allowed volunteers to gain access to do trapping and provided support to the Wapiti Area Management Team by removing untargeted red deer.

Garston School won the Richard Henry Award for Southland schools, restoring an area in front of the school on State Highway 6 in partnership with DOC and Environment Southland.

It removed a significant amount of weeds from the site and the pupils and community carried out planting days and developed a walking track through the site.

Ka Mate Nga Kiore won the award for Services to Conservation with Communities which is presented to Southland groups involved in specific conservation efforts and projects in community.



**Helicopter pilot Richard Hayes**

One of Ka Mate Nga Kiore's goals was for the protection and enhancement of four off-shore islands for future generations and reintroduction of species.

The Islands are Taukihepa, Pukeweka, Rewiwhakaupoko, and Mokonui, all titi/muttonbird islands.

Members have provided liaison between DOC (contractors eradicating rats) and mutton birders. They have also co-ordinated birders input to poisoning on the ground and around buildings.

Stewart Island Flights won the Corporate Conservation Award, which acknowledges the role businesses play in assisting DOC in achieving its goals.

Stewart Island Flights has sponsored transfer of weka back into Halfmoon Bay township and provided free flights and freight to Stewart Island Community and Environment Trust for many years.

The business plays an integral role in conservation management of Stewart Island/Rakiura.