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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Mr Mark T. Smith

It is a great pleasure to write in support of Mark Smith. There is absolutely no doubt that Mark was the best assistant to have worked in my research group. I have had several excellent research assistants; Mark was outstanding. He made a sustained and vital contribution to our work on the termination or chromosome application over a period of about 15 years, starting in 1982. I am very much indebted to him and we were sorry when he decided to move to a tenured position at Westmead in the late 1990's.

Mark had just completed an Honours year in our Department with Dr. R.E. Loughlin when he joined us. He came with very valuable experience and expertise in bacterial molecular genetics and was able to apply this immediately in assisting in our first cloning of the replication terminus region of *Bacillus subtilis*. His laboratory work was noted for its careful planning and high level of expertise in its execution. Mark was extremely thorough and kept the best laboratory notes I have seen. I have used the latter often as an example for incoming research students. Within a few years Mark's knowledge of the termination of replication area was such that he started to take a major role in the generation of approaches to the answering of important questions and to the planning of experimental work. I consider his paper in 1988 on the DNA sequence requirements for replication fork arrest (Smith & Wake, *J. Bacteriol.* **170** 4083-4090) as a major contribution to the area. It made a strong predication concerning the existence of a replication terminator protein and was seminal to our progress over the subsequent 10 years. Eventually the extent and nature of Mark's contribution was really equivalent to that of a postdoctoral researcher. By the time Mark left us he had completed enough to write up two PhD theses if he had so wished.

Mark not only contributed through his experimental research. I relied on him heavily for assistance in the training of many Honours and PhD students. The students had great respect for Mark's scientific and human attributes and they routinely commented on these in the acknowledgement section of their theses.

It is clear that while Mark Smith worked with me as a Research Assistant and eventually as a Senior Research Assistant he was, for most of the time, a very valuable and informed collaborator in research. He was totally dedicated to all that he undertook and I could not have been more impressed by his qualities as a scientist and as a person. I value his continued friendship and wish him well in his present work and any further changes in direction.

R.G. Wake