

Press Release



Attention Chief Reporter
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Engineers congratulate departing fuel cell colleague

"New Zealanders should feel very pleased that Waikato University engineering Professor Nigel Sammes and his team of students have an opportunity to make some serious money out of their research into fuel cells," says Warwick Bishop, CEO at the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ). Professor Sammes is a member of IPENZ.

"The only way fuel cell technology - which offers the potential for pollution free energy - will ever develop is if somebody finds a way to make their fortune out of it. We hope this is the first step on that journey for Professor Sammes and his students." he went on to say.

Mr Bishop said that the publicly funded science lobby was misleading the public with talk that the loss of Professor Sammes was symptomatic of New Zealand's decline as a knowledge economy.

"Most successful research of this type is done in the private sector, or at least funded by it. Very little government funded research around the globe results in commercial processes, products or services that reach the marketplace. Tait Electronics, Fisher & Paykel, Jade, and others like them in New Zealand, do their own research to secure their future, their growth and their on-going success."

Mr Bishop said the science lobby had a lot to fear from close scrutiny of where New Zealand spent its research dollars. Having poured over \$300 million a year into science for decades the public, and particularly the unemployed, should ask where are the jobs and industries that should have resulted from this?

"There is already plenty of research being done in New Zealand into esoteric areas that have little chance of commercial success. Increased funding is not the answer. At least not from the public purse. New Zealand needs many more companies doing their own research and development into devising products that the rest of the world wants. Under the new government we are likely to see increased encouragement of that approach."

"The much vaunted "knowledge economy" will only come about if the research and development done in New Zealand is largely commercially driven. Scientists must not decide the research topics or priorities. These must be led by the market and funded by entrepreneurs, investors, and risk takers. The research then needs development by commercially minded engineers such as Professor Sammes. By default people with these skills are generally not going to be those with cosy government jobs."

"Ultimately the knowledge economy is about making money from knowledge. So far the science lobby has only talked about spending more money. What engineers and others are talking about is making it".

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