

News release, 17 March 2010

### **PRESTIGIOUS ENGINEERING AWARD PRESENTED TO POLYTECHNIC CE**

Tai Poutini Polytechnic is delighted to announce that its chief executive Paul Wilson has been awarded the prestigious Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand 2010 Fulton-Downer Gold Medal.

The medal has been awarded in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the advancement of education in engineering and reflects the commitment and passion Wilson has for the industry as well as the leadership roles he has taken to raise New Zealand engineering standards to an internationally recognised level.

Wilson says, "It is an honour to accept this award which is the highest accolade given by IPENZ, of which I am a very proud member."

He attributes receiving the award to his enthusiasm for the industry. "I am very passionate about engineering and how it contributes to economic growth in New Zealand. We need engineering to support our country's infrastructure programmes and unless we attract more students into engineering we are going to struggle to keep up with demand."

Wilson says had it not been for the opportunities IPENZ had given him over the years then he would not be in a position to accept this award. "The role within IPENZ has given me great insight into New Zealand engineering standards and how they compare internationally. We have always had a high calibre of skilled engineers working in the industry, and contributing at an international level has confirmed that."

In addition, he attributes fellow engineer and mentor Basil Wakelin to his success. Wakelin was awarded the Fulton Downer gold medal in 2007 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to tertiary education quality assurance systems.

Wilson says most New Zealanders are unaware of how fundamental professional engineering is to our daily lives. "Virtually every aspect of our lives is touched by engineers, from power generation and IT infrastructure to how our cars go every morning. I have a passion for this and to the value that engineering gives us all."

Wilson has been an early leader in the development of engineering technology education standards at both a national and international level. He represented New Zealand at the International Engineering Alliance meetings in 2005 and 2009 and chaired the 2008 international review of the United States for its entry to the Sydney Accord.

The Sydney Accord is a multi-country agreement committing signatory countries to high standards of engineering education, in particular to the three year Bachelor of Engineering Technology (BEngTech) qualification. The Sydney Accord has similar objectives to the Washington Accord, which provides international standards for the four year Bachelor of Engineering (University level) and the Dublin Accord, which provides international standards for the two year Diploma of Engineering.

Wilson was actively involved last year in creating a single degree programme common to all six New Zealand educational institutions teaching the BEngTech qualification. "All New Zealand graduates now meet these international standards, giving them the opportunity to work overseas and importantly, bring that experience and expertise back to New Zealand."

"Bringing a consistent standard to an internationally recognised degree has been essential for the industry. We need to attract more students into what is a very well paid and attractive career and making sure degree is internationally benchmarked and transferrable overseas is paramount to that objective."

Wilson has also been involved in a number of accreditation panels both in New Zealand and overseas, and now chairs the IPENZ Standards and Accreditation Board. Prior to undertaking that role, he was the first chair of the IPENZ Competency Assessment Board, which he led through the establishment of outcomes-based assessment processes. His expertise was later used by the Engineers Mobility Forum in international reviews of competence assessment processes in Ireland and the United Kingdom in 2008 and 2009.

IPENZ says the various national and international roles Paul has undertaken have demanded commitment as a volunteer far beyond the norm. "For his leadership and commitment to developing and maintaining engineering qualification standards, it is fitting that Paul Wilson be recognised with the Fulton-Downer Gold Medal, the 2010 President's Award for public service."

ENDS

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Tai Poutini Polytechnic

[www.tppweb.ac.nz](http://www.tppweb.ac.nz)

**About Tai Poutini Polytechnic:**

*Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) offers a range of exciting programmes, has had one of the highest course completion rates in New Zealand for the last 3 years, has low student to tutor ratios and great relationships with business and industry. TPP has campuses in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch, Wanaka, Invercargill, Westport, Greymouth, Reefton and Hokitika. In 2010 Scholarships are available for most programmes\* (\* Conditions apply)*