



MEDIA RELEASE

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Coast Nanotechnology targets clean energy sector

Nanotechnology being developed on the Sunshine Coast with the support of the Innovation Centre, aims to capture a significant slice of booming clean energy markets.

Nano-Nouvelle, which started in the Innovation Centre's Business Incubator and continues to get business advice and support from the centre as an associate client, is the brainchild of Geoff Edwards, who is developing a nano-structured semiconductor, in the form of a thin film, to efficiently convert various forms of energy into electricity.

Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Entrepreneur-in-Residence Nigel Hall said the state-of-the-art technology had great potential across a range of applications, which was why Nano-Nouvelle had just received an AusIndustry Climate Ready grant of \$276,000 to assist with research and development.

Dr Edwards, a Coast local who has travelled extensively gaining world-class nanotech expertise, said the semi-conductor they were developing could have a number of applications in the renewable energy sector.

"While our technology is at an early stage of development, potential applications in clean energy are very large. The key to widespread use of clean energy is provision of that energy at a price that is competitive with fossil fuels. Our technology aims to assist this".

Dr Edwards is excited to be part of the 'nanotechnology age' but cautions against being caught up in the hype.

"The current flood of interest in nanotechnology suggests nanotech is very new. In fact, it has been known since the development of aircraft alloys in the sixties that nanometre-scale features play a critical role in the performance of advanced materials."

"The recent explosion in nanotechnology is exciting as it is providing new ways to manipulate the structure of materials at the nanometre scale (one nanometer is one millionth of a millimeter).

However to build a real business, we need to remove the hype and deliver high performance products that can be manufactured at large scale and at a realistic price. Cost and scale have hitherto greatly limited the widespread use of nanotechnology".

Dr Edwards said he always had a strong interest in renewable energy and was very pleased to be able to return to the Coast to set up his company.

“I wanted my kids to grow up in the kind of environment I did, with the beach at their doorstep and having the Innovation Centre resources available as well as its active development of a local renewable energy industry made this a viable option,” Dr Edwards said. “Grant schemes like Climate Ready, and the old Commercial Ready grants, are also critical to the creation and growth of high-tech companies like ours”.

Mr Hall said as a University of the Sunshine Coast company, dedicated to the development of the region’s economy, the Innovation Centre was proud to be playing a part in Nano Nouvelle’s development.

“Developing this kind of new technology locally shows the depth of talent in the region, talent that we need to use to drive development of sectors such as Green Technologies, Information Communication Technology (ICT), creative and knowledge-based industries,” Mr Hall said.

Dr Edwards said with the Climate Ready grant as well as private investment, Nano Nouvelle would now work on developing proof of concept for this totally new manufacturing technology, a process they were looking to complete by the end of the year. He said following that they planned to develop devices and scale up over the following two to three years, before undertaking large-scale commercialisation.

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