

## **Dr Peter John, Lincoln University Medal**

2013 Recipient

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Lincoln University's former Research and Commercialisation Office Director, Dr Peter John, epitomises the 'self-directed self-starter' whose activities are so valuable to the institution's mission.

As a small university with a small staff Lincoln University relies heavily on the individual initiative, energy, acumen and ability of numerous self-starters and self-directed staff members in sole-operator positions. Dr John was one of them.

His key contribution has been the identification and sustained pursuit of funding opportunities for research, and in this work he has achieved a remarkable record of success, with Lincoln currently earning more per full-time employee from research than any other New Zealand university.

Through his activities, Dr John created a funding environment which allowed Lincoln researchers to achieve singular success in their laboratory and field activities and in the subsequent processes of product commercialisation.

An engineer by academic qualification and professional training, Dr John has had a long career at Lincoln University starting in 1983 as a Principal Research Officer with the campus-based New Zealand Agricultural Engineering Institute. He later became Commercial Manager at the Institute, then in 1993 Chief Executive Officer of Lincoln Ventures Ltd. In 2005 he was appointed Director of the Research and Commercialisation Office.

In recent years he has poured his heart and soul into working with academic colleagues to secure funds for their research and commercialisation of the intellectual property that resulted from this. Dr John also secured substantial amounts of financial support for further technical development to proof of concept and then pre-commercial stage. He has also led most of the University's research-related market validation and business case activities, work which is vital to maximising Lincoln's ability to deliver high quality economic, environmental and social outcomes to New Zealand's land-based industries.

The identification of appropriate funding sources and opportunities for research and commercialisation, and the preparation and submission of applications, are esoteric operations. They take place 'beneath the radar' and 'beyond the ken' of most university staff, but are absolutely critical to the viability of the University as a research and teaching institution.

Beyond research funding applications there is the whole world of intellectual property (IP) and patents. Dr John has unquestionably been the key resource person at Lincoln University in this arcane but essential area of knowledge and procedures. Individual researchers and the University have much to thank him for in regard to his IP expertise.

Dr John has made significant external contributions to the world of science and research. For example, he played an influential role in the formation of both the Kiwi Innovation Network (Kiwinet), which helps researchers from across New Zealand commercialise their work, and is the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and its predecessors' most experienced Investment Panel Chair.

Through this and other leading external roles, Dr John has done much to enhance the reputation of Lincoln University as New Zealand's leading and most intensive applied research university supporting the country's largest industry, therefore making Dr John a worthy recipient of the Lincoln University Medal.