

MEDIA RELEASE

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Anniversary milestone for world renowned Nelson based researcher

New Zealand's largest independent community owned research organisation celebrates nine decades of service to science in New Zealand this week.

It will be exactly ninety years tomorrow (Saturday April 2nd 2011) since the Nelson-based Cawthron Institute, established through a bequest from Nelson's greatest benefactor, Thomas Cawthron was officially opened.

Cawthron Chief Executive, Gillian Wratt says while most of us during our lifetime will attend a number of special occasions, it is not often we get to attend a 90th anniversary.

"It is a momentous occasion for us, for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the very fact a privately funded organisation devoted to the public good has even managed to reach such a significant milestone.

"As an independent research organisation, we have no entitlement to any government support, although in recent years we have successfully bid for government funding for specific research projects. Throughout its history Cawthron Institute has largely had to rely on its own resources to survive."

The Governor-General, the Honourable Sir Anand Satyanand, will officiate at a celebratory function at the Nelson School of Music tonight (Friday April 1st) – the same place and ninety years almost to the day that Lord Jellicoe, the then Governor-General officially opened the Institute.

At that time Lord Jellicoe referred to Thomas Cawthron as a ‘true patriot’ and in his speech expressed his view the Institute would “benefit the whole of New Zealand to an immense extent”.

Cawthron Trust Board Chairman, Bob Dickinson says there can be no denying it has certainly done that in the nine decades since.

“Despite two world wars, a depression and the constantly changing face of science funding, Cawthron Institute has continued to play an important part in the scientific development and economic growth of our nation.

“From very early research that traced “bush sickness” in cattle to a lack of cobalt, to shellfish breeding today, Cawthron’s research programmes have helped overcome problems hindering this region’s and the country’s future development and prosperity, just as Thomas Cawthron wished.”

And as the Institute looks towards the next ninety years, Bob Dickinson says trustees, directors and staff remain committed to ensuring it remains an enduring monument to its founders memory – not only stimulating scientific research throughout the whole of New Zealand but also following in his philanthropic footsteps.

Cawthron Institute is a recognised leader in the development of New Zealand’s aquaculture industry, and in the protection and restoration of coastal and freshwater ecosystems.

It has recently opened extensions to its Glenhaven Aquaculture Centre, the site of its world class aquaculture research, which includes New Zealand’s first oyster hatchery and the world’s first mussel selective breeding programme.

Five hundred Nelson residents last weekend accepted Cawthron’s invitation to tour its Glenhaven research and development facility. The Open Day was part of the Institute’s 90th anniversary

celebrations which also include the annual Cawthron lecture and a special exhibition at the Nelson Provincial Museum later this year focussing on Cawthron's research and history over 90 years.

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