



TALENTED KIWIS TAKE TOP SPOTS IN TAIWAN INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

Two Kiwi students have won first and second place in the engineering category at the prestigious Taiwan International Science Fair.

Shahn Taylor (18), from Hawkes Bay, won first place with an electricity-generating wind turbine he made from an old washing machine, while Nicholas Mabey (18), from Auckland, was second with a transforming robot.

The Taiwan International Science Fair runs for six days every year, and attracts project entries from more than 200 students from 11 countries. Shahn and Nicholas' journey to Taiwan began with their project success in the 2010 ETITO Bright Sparks Awards – a nationwide electronics and programming competition for New Zealand school students. After seeing first-hand the calibre of their entries, Ross Petersen, ETITO's Bright Sparks manager, nominated them and three other Bright Sparks to take part in the Royal Society of New Zealand's Realise the Dream Programme. They were accepted and showcasing their talent during Realise the Dream won them both all-expenses-paid travel awards to compete in Taiwan.

Shahn and Nicholas represented themselves and New Zealand well in Taiwan.

They were presented with their top places at the closing ceremony attended by Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou.

Shahn says he and Nicholas were excited. "We were thinking 'this can't be real!' They gave us really big trophies, prize money and a certificate."

Aside from showcasing their inventions to the world, the itinerary also featured a cultural tour around Taipei, including a trip to the top of Taipei 101, the second tallest building in the world. "It was great being able to experience such a different culture and way of life than I'm used to in New Zealand," says Nicholas. "With the amount of contestants I was up against, I didn't really think I had much of a chance. I never expected to get anything out of my robot and I didn't think anyone outside my circle of friends would even hear about it. So for me to get a prize in an international competition was just absolutely amazing."

Shahn says: "I had to explain my micro turbine to so many people, but it was nice to see how many were interested in wind power. The event was enormous, I had no idea how big it was going to be. "The trip was an amazing experience. I will remember it for the rest of my life."

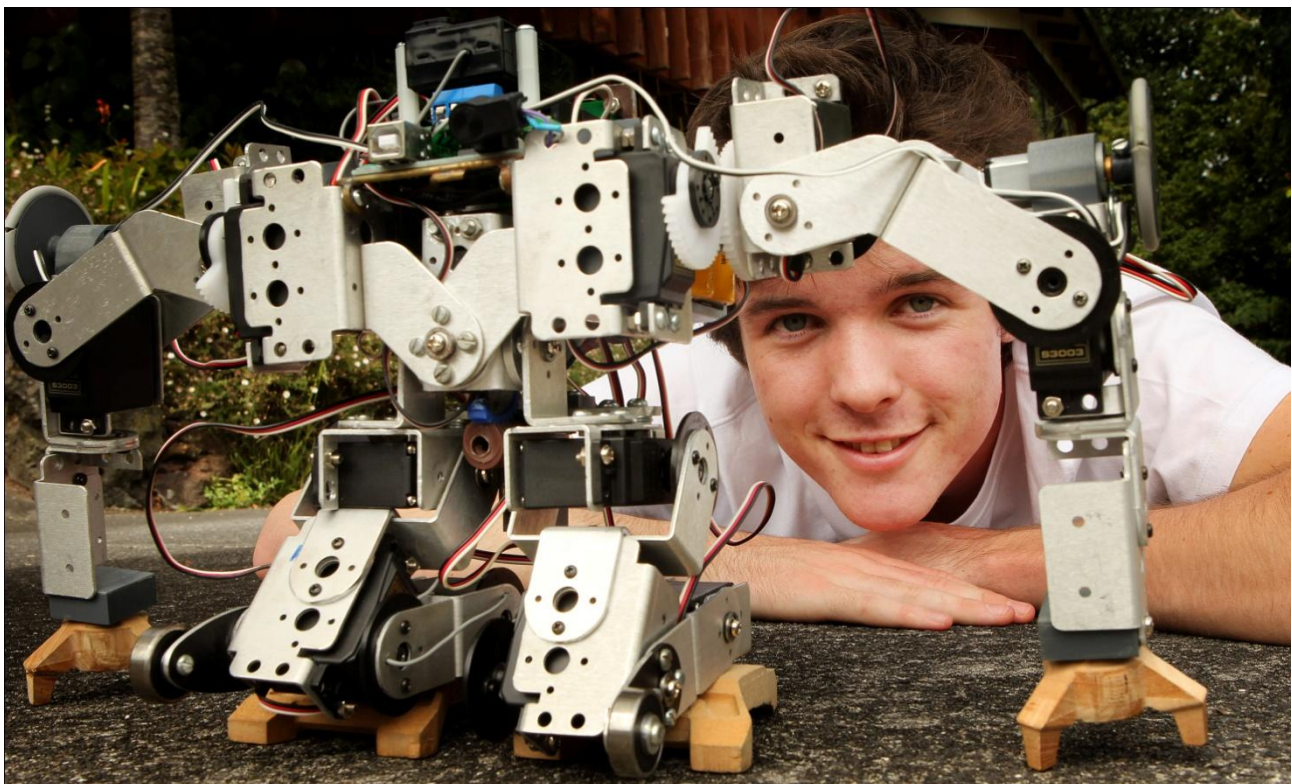
Shahn and Nicholas return from Taiwan having maintained the legacy of the ETITO Bright Sparks Competition. In 2010 winning Bright Sparks took first in computer science and third in engineering, and in 2009 took first and second place in engineering.

Now that they're home, Shahn is pursuing a career in electrical engineering and Nicholas is studying engineering at Auckland University.

For further information on Bright Sparks and Shahn and Nicholas' projects visit www.brightsparksawards.org.nz.



Shahn Taylor came first in Taiwan with his Micro Turbine



Nicholas Mabey placed second with his Transforming Robot