



# NEWS RELEASE

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## YOUNG KIWI INVENTORS GET SMARTER BY THE YEAR

A wind turbine crafted from an old washing machine has taken the grand prize in the 2010 ETITO Bright Sparks Awards for young inventors.

Shahn Taylor [18] of Hawke's Bay was inspired by the need for cleaner energy technology to build a fully functional wind turbine at his family home. While many secondary school students were busy doing what teenagers do with their spare time, Shahn spent most of his spare time planning and building the impressive turbine.

Winners and placegetters in the four ETITO Bright Sparks Awards categories likewise impressed the judges with a range of inventions with the potential to save life, to solve day-to-day challenges, and to entertain. Many of the prototypes have commercial potential and are attracting interest. They include a battery-powered mobile phone charger, several dairy industry inventions, a mobile phone that operates as a TV remote and a transformer robot.

Bright Sparks is run by industry training organisation ETITO to foster talent and interest for hi-tech and electrotechnology careers. More than 150 secondary schools across New Zealand are involved in its National Certificate in Electronics Technology programme and over 2000 young people are active members of the Bright Sparks online network.

Award entrants have the best part of a school year to design and develop an invention – the only criteria it has to use electronic engineering or programming elements.

Twenty seven finalists were selected from over 70 entries. In selecting the winners, the judges were looking for outstanding technical excellence, innovation and passion. They were not disappointed.

Ross Petersen, ETITO's Bright Sparks Manager, says the judging panel of technology industry experts found this year's entries inspiring.

"The judges praised the effort of the students but also gave special mention to some of the schools where they noted the teaching continued to be inspirational and very dedicated – an important part in helping these young people succeed, along with their families."

Mr Petersen says that while the older students' projects were more complex, the true innovation tended to come in the 15-16 year-old group.

"But one thing that did stand out for the judges was the impressive entrants from the juniors. The juniors – from around 11 to 14, are submitting much more complex inventions these days than they were to Bright Sparks five years ago. That's very encouraging for the country as we look to build the next generation of inventors, problem-solvers and entrepreneurs."

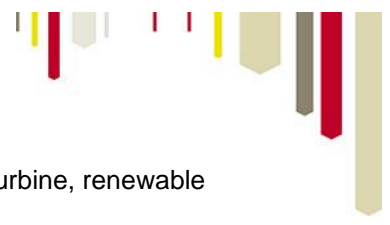
Mr Petersen says it is also pleasing that five of the Bright Sparks have now been chosen to take part in the Royal Society's Realise the Dream programme to further foster their talent.

### **The full list of Bright Sparks category winners are:**

**Up to 12 years:** Katie Starsmore, St Joseph's Primary, Opunake, for her Safety Moover farm safety invention.

**13-14 years:** Logan Glasson, Burnside High, Christchurch for his Mobile Phone TV Remote.

**15-16 years:** Reuben Posthuma, Home School, of Christchurch for his Driver Minder, a system design to reduce the road toll by requiring driver licence and other verifications before the vehicle will start.



**17+ years:** Shahn Taylor, Taikura Rudolf Steiner School of Hawke's Bay for his Microturbine, renewable energy wind turbine.

**People's Choice Award** [decided by online voting]: Nicholas Mabey, King's College, Auckland for his Transformer Robot.

To view all the Bright Sparks projects in action, including video and information about their inventors, visit [www.brightsparksawards.org.nz](http://www.brightsparksawards.org.nz).

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