

# TALENTNZ

*Creating a place where talent wants to live*

## Media Release: TalentNZ initiative officially launched today

1 November 2013

Sir Paul Callaghan suggested a way forward for New Zealand to be successful in the 21st century – an idea that took him a number of years to research, analyse, discuss and reflect upon. In 2011 he presented his idea at a workshop the Institute hosted called *StrategyNZ*. Sir Paul framed this big idea into one line – a place where talent wants to live. This idea resonated with over 100 participants and continues to be resurface in discussions and strategies up and down the country.

Today the Institute is pleased to announce the next step in the idea – the *TalentNZ* initiative which explores how this idea might be implemented. The launch of this new initiative begins with a *Journal*, here 30 kiwis answer seven questions on talent. We also ask four mayors and other contributors to share their thoughts. The *Journal* is the start of a deeper discussion on how we might best implement Sir Paul's vision. Next year we plan to take this idea on the road, our aim is to test our assumptions and share ideas, ideally working with others to develop momentum around how we might create a talent-based economy.

This will require a change in focus. New Zealand came on to the world stage as an economy based on natural resources (e.g. coal, gold, gum), which then evolved into an agricultural-based economy. This is how most developed countries grew their economy, but they then moved on to create economies based on providing services and intellectual property. New Zealand, as a whole, has not made this move.

This is why Sir Paul's idea of a talent-based economy resonated; it not only recognises that talented people are key to future economic growth, but that creating a place where talented people want to live should be a major consideration in decision-making both nationally and locally. At its most basic level, the *Journal* is our attempt to explore how such a strategy might be implemented. As a result of the thirty interviews, four key goals became apparent – we need to *grow*, *attract*, *retain* and *connect* talent. We encourage all New Zealanders to either jointly or separately work towards implementing Sir Paul Callaghan's vision. As a starting point we ask New Zealanders to *buy* the *Journal*, *visit* the website, *join* the TalentNZ network and *follow* the conversation.

The most important resources in the 21st century are people – and more specifically talented people. Countries, cities and regions will all need to compete to *grow*, *attract*, *retain* and *connect* talent; those that do not will struggle. There are no boundaries for talented people – countries do not matter, places do. Talent is the new currency just as programming is the new language. Countries that understand this new economy will get a first mover advantage. New Zealand could and should be one of these countries.

The journal can be purchased from select stores and online from [mcguinnessinstitute.bigcartel.com](http://mcguinnessinstitute.bigcartel.com)

Each day in November we will add a new interview to the website ([talentnz.org](http://talentnz.org)); enabling you to check back every few days and read another insight into talent.

The four key goals are best understood through the voices of the interviewees overleaf:

### **For further information please contact:**

Wendy McGuinness  
Chief Executive  
McGuinness Institute  
+64 4 499 8888  
+ 021 781 200

[wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org](mailto:wmcg@mcguinnessinstitute.org)  
[www.mcguinnessinstitute.org](http://www.mcguinnessinstitute.org)

## Grow talent

*"If I could rewrite the school curriculum, I would say let's forget French and let's make sure that programming is a core language, because it is the language of the 21st century."* – Frances Valentine

*"Honestly, school is so far removed from the actual skill sets you're going to need, unless you want to be an actual researcher or a teacher."* – Tim Nixon

*"I would ask all of them [young New Zealanders] to broaden their education, to read widely, to get*

*the basic tools to analyse the world's data rather than be at the mercy of it."* – Jim Flynn

## Attract talent

*"Immigration policy is the key; we cannot build the scale ourselves because we don't have enough people."* – Raf Manji

*"Talent does attract talent, and talent wants to live in places where it is exciting, where they are challenged and stimulated in many different ways."* – Andrew Coy

*"A big part of our acquisition is not just of customers, but of talent."* – Rod Drury

## Retain talent

*"I've personally thought about going home [to New Zealand] at times over the past ten years and it is extremely difficult ... "* – Rachel Carrell

*"In terms of retaining people, we try to do right by our staff, giving them the freedom to do their jobs and satisfaction from 'getting shit done'."* – Mike (MOD) O'Donnell

*"I believe we have a window of five years maybe whilst New Zealand has this opportunity to ride the crest of the wave of staying relevant in this digital age."* – Rik Athorne

## Connect talent

*"Part of the secret is knowing who to talk to when you have a problem, because a problem is an opportunity."* – Graeme Wong

*"I think we're relatively weak at leveraging the global network of New Zealanders. They're all out there but they're not leveraged well."* – Tim Bennett

*"Innovation happens when ideas have sex, and that only happens if you put a whole bunch of different disciplines in the same place and let them bump into each other."* – Kaila Colbin