

around times - it took more than six months and Development fund, aimed at helping SMEs undertake R&D, were worth \$10.9 million.

TNZ business manager Fraser Smith says the key message to businesses think- edin craft kit maker Gondwana Creative to get an answer to a grant application. The time-lag can mean missing out on oppor- Kits. Managing director Graeme Sykes

From Raglan to Florida: on a roll with indoor surf

A Raglan company with plans to make big waves on the international surfing scene has nothing but praise for its government partner in the project, Technology New Zealand.

Artificial Surf Reefs, along with Surf Pools and American-based Aquatic Development Group, one of the world's biggest operators of surf pool systems, is about to test its innovative idea of a giant indoor wave pool at Orlando, Florida.

ASR managing director Dr Kerry Black says as a research and development project, the wave pool technology was a major undertaking that may not have happened without the \$500,000 injected by Technology New Zealand over the past five years. "I would highly recommend any company wanting to do R&D approaches TNZ first," he says.

"I've got nothing but praise for them. Research and development with this project was a major challenge and TNZ understood that."

ASR's wave pool will be four Olympic-sized pools in one, with swells up to 2.4m high. The company hopes the technology will revolutionise the sport of surfing by producing first-rate waves at indoor pools. The surf pool technology, including a specially

developed floor that is raised and lowered in the pool by computerised winches and hydraulics, was first tested in a Waikato cove and the concept has the potential to sell around the world.

ASR and partner Surf Pools received two grants from Technology New Zealand, a Private Sector Research and Development Grant in 2000 and, last year, a \$400,000 investment through TNZ's Technology for Business Growth programme.

Dr Black says the application process is thorough but not overly complex. TNZ was also able to move quickly, so that contractual arrangements the company made were met.

Reporting requirements from TNZ are stringent and if a you miss a deadline for financial and progress reports, you don't get the money, Dr Black says.

ASR aims to have its giant pool built by the end of the year. It will cost around \$10 million and have a range of reef shapes to deliver a variety of wave types while also giving surfers a longer ride.

Once the technology is proven, SPL will license selected organisations to use it but New Zealand will remain home base for the company, Dr Black says.



WAVE RIDERS: A research grant has assisted Dr Kerry Black, pictured, and his business partner Dr Shaw Mead, to revolutionise surf pool technology. PICTURE / AMOS CHAPPLLE