

Dynamism gets results

Women in Business



Oiga Galacho

RICHMOND company Dynamic Hearing has more than broken the sound barrier with its futuristic software for hearing aids.

Known as ADRO, the trademarked processing technology is the biggest step forward in its field in 30 years, according to Dynamic Hearing's chief executive Dr Elaine Saunders.

And the award winning invention also allowed Dr Saunders to recently win a Telstra Business Women's Award in the Australian Government Private and Corporate Sector category.

Dynamic Hearing shares the same heritage as Cochlear, evolving from the highly regarded research group led by Professor Graeme Clark at Melbourne University.

The company was spun off in 2002 from the Co-operative Research Centre aligned with Cochlear.

It has been funded with venture capital and Dr Saunders, an audiologist, said that in a couple of years it was likely to pursue an exit strategy, but it was too early to say whether that would involve a public listing or a trade sale.

Since Dynamic Hearing was formed, it has made three new patent applications.

And its showpiece product, the ADRO software, is on the threshold of conquering global audiometry markets, thanks to a deal with German-US company Interton.

"This month, the product will be showcased at a trade fair in Frankfurt that Dr Saunders believes will be pivotal to increasing Dynamic Hearing's exposure to new markets.

As there are no Australian manufac-



From idea to product: Dr Elaine Saunders. Picture: JON HARGEST

turers of hearing aids, export markets are vital to Dynamic Hearing.

But the company's reach is not restricted to the makers of devices for deaf patients.

"We are trying to treat every individual as someone who has a unique hearing profile so that everyone can achieve good quality hearing all the time," said Dr Saunders,

whose own father was hearing impaired.

In addition to powering hearing aids, Dynamic Hearing's software has the potential to be installed in mobile phones, call centre headsets and other equipment designed to transmit sound direct to the ear.

The technology could even assist people with normal hearing that is

hampered by background noise in their working environments.

Dr Saunders believes she won the Telstra award because of her ability to manage technology and transform it into a business.

"We have taken an innovative idea with promising results and turned it into a product that we are commercialising in international markets," she said.

"You need grit and determination to get over the obstacles in order to succeed commercially in this field.

"We have some terrific know-how in medical technology here and I think Dynamic Hearing provides a good example for developing an innovation, turning it into a business and taking it internationally.

"I am quite passionate about commercialising our Australian technology."

Dr Saunders' drive to succeed can be traced back to her childhood in the English Midlands, where she was a keen runner.

She was a junior 400m champion and often represented her country in international competitions.

Her exceptional endurance levels were revealed again when she started her family in Australia.

She established a mail order business selling imported health products from her home, and completed her PhD while bringing up her four children, who are now aged between 12 and 18.

While she was initially anxious about re-entering the workforce after spending years at home with her children she said that once she made the transition, it was not so daunting.

"Women who want to go back to work after having children should not be afraid," she said.

"I learned an enormous amount when I was home and these women need to know that although they have not been in paid work, they have been acquiring new skills.

"They absolutely should not hesitate about picking up their careers again."

oigalcho@heraldson.com.au