

## Media Release

### ***“New Zealand’s most eminent space engineer to visit his homeland”***

Wellington born Dr. William Pickering KBE is returning to New Zealand for a visit this coming March. Dr. Pickering, the only New Zealander to appear twice on the front cover of Time magazine, directed the US Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) from 1954 until 1976. JPL provided the technology for the US Space Programme including the first unmanned journeys to the moon and exploration flights to other planets in our solar system.

Since he retired from JPL, Dr Pickering has forged a second career as a speaker and businessman having formed and grown a company to develop some energy related products. Now aged 91 he is still very active in these activities and planning his visit has had to fit around his very busy speaking and business commitments in the USA.

During the visit, apart from spending time on holiday in the Marlborough Sounds with family members, he will be speaking at the annual convention of the Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) as well as re-opening the restored Gifford Observatory at Wellington College. The observatory was an important influence on Dr. Pickering when he was a student at the College in the 1920s.

At the IPENZ Convention, which has a theme of “Harnessing Technological Innovation for New Zealand”, he will give a keynote address on managing innovation as well as giving the annual IPENZ Newnham Lecture at the Wellington Town Hall on the afternoon of Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March. This lecture will discuss the challenges of exploring the solar system with automated spacecraft. At this lecture the winner will be announced of an essay competition currently being run among secondary schools in Wellington region. The essay competition is based on the theme of the convention and has a first prize of a trip to JPL in Pasadena, California.

### **For further information**

For further information on the visit, media access to Dr. Pickering and the IPENZ Convention contact IPENZ Deputy Chief Executive John Gardiner. Contact details; DDI 04 474 8932, mobile 0274 395 130, e-mail [jgardiner@ipenz.org.nz](mailto:jgardiner@ipenz.org.nz)

[www.ipenz.org.nz](http://www.ipenz.org.nz)