**HD** **Australian academia cashes in on business ties**

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by Christian Edwards

SYDNEY, Feb. 17 (Xinhua) -- The historic **sale** last week of a groundbreaking high-tech start inspired by a collaboration between business and academia expected to open the flood gates on Australian universities' march into global business.

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Lithicon AS, a collaboration between the Australian National University (ANU) and NewSouth Innovations - a special division of the University of NSW (UNSW), was snapped up for 76 **million** Australian dollars (about 68 **million** U.S. dollars) to the United States-based FEI **Company**, specializing in imaging technology for **oil** and gas exploration.

The little known NewSouth Innovations (NSi) operates on the cutting edge of innovative and commercial science, its brief to operate as a gateway to research discoveries and inventions within the UNSW.

NSi focuses on transforming research discoveries into successful innovations and products to benefit society, the economy and future generations.

The **sale** of Lithicon, previously known as Digitalcore, follows another NSi breakthrough last month when **China** Sunergy Co., a specialized **solar** cell and module manufacturer, announced a five- year collaborative research agreement with NSi to substantially improve **solar** cell efficiency by improving wafer material quality.

"This is an outstanding example of co-operation between two of Australia's leading research universities moving great research into use in our society and enabling new industries to evolve," said Graham Morton, general manager of UNSW's NewSouth Innovations.

NSi is taking to market more than 200 inventions in areas such as diagnostic and therapeutic drugs, biomedical devices, **solar** cell technology, waste recycling and nanotechnology, just to name a few.

The Sunergy deal will combine UNSW's advanced hydrogenation technology with **China** Sunergy's experience in cell process to enhance the electrical properties of silicon wafers, and thereby to obtain significantly higher cell efficiencies. Additionally, UNSW will provide updates on its latest research advancements, and, when necessary, provide training and education at UNSW.

"We are very delighted to collaborate with UNSW and NSi," said Dr. Jianhua Zhao, chief technology officer of **China** Sunergy.

"If this research proves successful, **China** Sunergy would gain significant competitive advantages and cost savings, as we will be entitled to deploy the resulting technologies throughout our product portfolio."

Lithicon was originally set up in 2009 by ANU scientists in collaboration with colleagues at UNSW to develop an advanced computational approach to rapidly solving fluid behavior in **oil** reservoirs.

They came up with a revolutionary high-resolution 3D imaging technique with FEI planning to develop new markets outside **oil** and gas using the imaging technology.

The ANU is garnering 11 **million** Australian dollars from the **sale** proceeds, representing a five-fold increase in its original investment. UNSW will receive 4 **million** Australian dollars.

Prior to the start-up, researchers at ANU and UNSW created a research consortium with 14 multinational **oil** and gas companies to prove and develop the emerging technology and allow the concept to be market tested.

Lithicon general manager Dr. Victor Pantano said the Lithicon story is one of taking world-class research from two of Australia' s best universities and turning it into a growing business.

"In the process we have created a whole new industry segment based on high-value, intensive, knowledge-based services. It's exactly the sort of thing we should be doing in Australia and we need more of it," he said.

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**CO** feicom : FEI Company

**IN** itheradv : Therapeutic Devices/Equipment | i372 : Medical Equipment/Supplies | i951 : Health Care/Life Sciences | iphmed : Medical/Surgical Instruments/Apparatus/Devices | i3442 : Environmental Control Systems | iindele : Industrial Electronics | iindstrls : Industrial Goods

**RE** austr : Australia | sydney : Sydney | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | nswals : New South Wales

**IPD** Australia

**PUB** Xinhua News Agency

**AN** Document XNEWS00020140217ea2h000p9

 