

Winner has global success in sight

By John Thistleton
Business Editor

Life-saving and sight-saving technology was the toast of Canberra's business community last night.

Seeing Machines, which began eight years ago from research out of the Australian National University, was named winner of the Canberra Business Council's Business Success Series at a gala dinner.

The company's chairman, Fulton Muir, said the award capped a fantastic week in which he had approved the accounts, which recorded a profit for the first time.

Leaving the office last night to attend the awards, he took a quick phone call from the United States, informing him Disney Corporation

had bought one of Seeing Machines' products, opening up a lucrative new market in the gaming industry.

Seeing Machines technology includes products that counter driver fatigue in the trucking industry and in the design of cockpits for cars, trucks, trains and aeroplanes.

Research has shown inattentiveness, due to tiredness or distraction, is the single largest cause of accidents and the Canberra technology is being applied across the transport industry to warn drivers about their tiredness.

Mr Muir, who is also chairman of ANU Enterprise, said his only regret was that Seeing Machines' 34 bright young staff from 10 different countries were not on the stage with him to accept the award.

"And they will take Seeing



VISION: Seeing Machines chairman Fulton Muir, left, receives the award at a gala dinner in Canberra last night. Belinda Burgess displays the Truefield device, used to diagnose eye diseases, at her Seeing Machines laboratory on the ANU campus.

Machines to the forefront of world technology," he said.

Canberra Business Council chairman Craig Sloane said the awards featured 10 outstanding finalists and



picking the best of the best was almost impossible, demonstrating the strength and diversity of the national capital's commercial sector.

Many of the companies had started

out of Canberra's universities, others had grown organically from a good idea.

In its 11th year, the Business Success Series is sponsored by ActewAGL and *The Canberra Times*.

Each month a successful local business is featured in the business pages of *The Canberra Times*. The series recognises the winners' success and contribution to the regional economy.

In March, Seeing Machines announced a long-term, multi-million-dollar licence agreement with Dycom Industries, which provides specialty contracting services throughout the United States for engineering, construction, and installation services.

Seeing Machines' computer vision technology measures the orientation

and position of a human head. It can estimate eye-gaze direction, detect eye blinks and track facial features.

Products such as faceLAB, Seeing Machines' flagship technology, allow researchers and designers to assess the interaction of an operator in an environment.

The technology has been developed into another product, Driver State Sensor, which uses a miniature camera on the dash board which detects drowsiness and driver fatigue. It does not require the driver to wear any sensors.

The sensor can provide a driver with feedback on fatigue and attention that increases safety and reduces accidents.

In June, the company received the first of an order of eight systems to supply the sensor into Swedish

Michigan Naturalistic Operational Test and is aggressively pursuing commercial opportunities in the United States and Europe.

Another product, TrueField Analyzer, helps doctors diagnose and manage eye diseases including glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.

Seeing Machines has opened an office in the United States to support its growing customer base and to capitalise on the success of DSS, which generated \$1.44 million in its first year of commercialisation.

Growth internationally will provide many opportunities for its diverse staff of 35 people.

Over the last two years many of its 20 new recruits came from the ANU and University of Canberra.