

# The beginning: a visionary entrepreneur, Paul Trainor

Paul Trainor was not a happy man as he entered the public gallery of Australia's Parliament House. The public gallery with its dark green leather, dark wooden panels and security guard at the door can be an intimidating place but Trainor was not one to be easily intimidated. He had spent his life taking risks and there was no way he was not going to be heard on this occasion. The public gallery of Parliament House is situated above the chamber housing the House of Representatives. Members of the general public and the press are able to hear and observe the elected representatives dealing with the nation's business, but on no account do they participate in the discussion. They are expected to sit in silence. Guards are at the door to ensure that protocol is observed. They are also there to eject any member of the public who does not behave appropriately and they have done so many times.

The year was 1976 and one of Trainor's roles was to serve on the board of the Industrial Research and Development Corporation (IR&DC) for the federal government. His dissatisfaction on this occasion was based on information provided to him, as a board member, that anyone without university qualifications was ineligible for IR&DC grants. Trainor knew, and his 'bitter bloody experience' (BBE, as he called it) had shown, that innovators were not necessarily academics. He was very much aware that it was not academic qualifications that produced blue-sky research discoveries. Trainor had failed engineering and dropped out of economics at the University of Sydney but had gone on to succeed in running a multi-national company. He was a perfect example of the philosophy that discoveries did not depend on academic qualifications, and it urged him to attend the parliamentary sitting.