



DOUG'S SHED: The Glendowie birthplace of Actronic Technologies.

Actronic measures up for Beachheads China scheme

by Anne Gibson

Actronic Technologies, the Avondale-headquartered mobile electronics weighing company, has become the first New Zealand business to be accepted into the new China Beachheads programme run by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise.

Beachheads assists and speeds entry and growth of New Zealand companies into overseas markets and the China Beachheads advisory board is the newest and seventh to be established by NZTE. This year's Budget voted \$8 million to NZTE's programmes targeting China, India and Southeast Asia.

Actronic has offices in Auckland, Shanghai, Australia, the Netherlands and North Carolina in the United States but it regards China and India as significant growth areas.

Mark Templeton, Actronic chief executive, said the business had already used Beachheads in North America but three years ago the company moved into China. It has now developed a weighing system with Mandarin language displays which is being trialled with customers. The first order arrived on Thursday.

Actronic's equipment is assembled in Auckland from imported parts. The business started 30 years ago in founder Doug Rankin's garden shed behind his Glendowie house.

"He tells us he had to move the lawnmower to get going," Templeton said.

In 2005 the company established a distribution partnership deal with

Swiss-headquartered multinational measurement business Mettler Toledo in Shanghai. Templeton said this had been a huge help.

"Mettler have coverage in China we could never emulate in terms of regional sales and technical support for their products. In China you have to look at the country regionally, both economically and politically, to really have a business infrastructure that works.

"Mettler distribute and market our products and we have Kevin Lai in our Shanghai office. He has worked at Actronic in Auckland and grew up in New Zealand but his family came from China. He works with Mettler around key marketing and sales opportunities," Templeton said.

"Since we've put him in place, the relationship with Mettler has strengthened considerably because even if you have the right partner, it's very hard to understand the local market. It's made a huge difference in being able to work with Mettler."

China generates less than 2.5 per cent of Actronic's revenue but he said the potential for the company's products to be sold in China is huge, particularly to enforce bans on railway overloading.

Templeton said Actronic had doubled in size in the last five years and had \$23 million annual turnover, 95 per cent generated from its exports to 40 countries.

China also offered big waste and recycling opportunities, with Actronic able to measure waste going into landfills or being recycled.