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Advances in Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and other emerging technologies, are creating exciting new opportunities for Adelaide businesses, but these opportunities aren't going to wait around forever.

Last Thursday, Adelaide's Science Exchange was host to some special guests operating at the forefront of artificial intelligence, robotics, and other emerging technologies. Fittingly, not all of these guests were human.

[AiLab \(Artificial Intelligence Laboratory\)](#) – supported by the [Australian Institute for Machine Learning \(AIML\)](#): [University of Adelaide](#), the [City of Adelaide](#), and the [Adelaide Artificial Intelligence Meetup](#) – presented an event that gave nearly 200 attendees the chance to hear from world-class experts on the opportunities and challenges arising from recent developments in AI and robotics.

[Dr Sue Keay](#), Research Director of CSIRO's Data61 Cyber-Physical Systems program, and chair of [Australia's first national robotics roadmap](#), highlighted the massive impact new technologies could have on Australia's economy. The benefit of these technologies could be as high as \$2.2 trillion AUD over the next 15 years. To put that number into context, it would more than double our current GDP.

There's no doubt that we're facing a huge opportunity, but we're going to have to work for it. With its growing reputation as a smart city, Adelaide is positioned to play a big role in this transformation.

Dr Keay explained that, to achieve such drastic improvements, we need to tackle some big challenges. These include:

- More investment into emerging technologies such as robotics and AI; an area in which we are currently falling behind many of our international competitors.
- A more inclusive technical workforce. With the underrepresentation of women in technology, we are missing out on 50% of our talent.
- A plan to transition fairly and responsibly to a new workforce structure; as new jobs are created and old jobs become obsolete.

Dr Keay encouraged the audience to consider the innovative ways we can leverage technology to solve major environmental problems. For example, robots are currently being used to help [regenerate coral and preserve the Great Barrier Reef](#).



Attendees got the chance to meet "temi", one of Exaptec's telepresence robots.

The second keynote was presented by [Nicci Rossouw](#) - Founder and CEO of Exaptec (Victoria).

Nicci supports the use of technology to improve wellbeing and work-life balance. She introduced us to [temi](#), a telepresence robot that can interact with humans and autonomously navigate around a home or place of business.

Temi, and similar robots provided by [Exaptec](#), are used for remote communication, automation, process

augmentation, and many other functions. They can enhance business, education, healthcare, and even your home or social life.

"It was an absolute honour being invited by AiLab to come to Adelaide to speak about Exaptec and our journey. Robotics is such an important topic, with a lot of misconceptions, so I'm very passionate about educating people how and where we use robots. Whether it's being in touch with your loved ones via telepresence robots, or marine robots pollinating our beautiful Great Barrier Reef, it's vitally important for Australia to start utilising this technology and embracing it," said Nicci Rossouw.

The event was MC'd by [Ali Anderson](#), Outreach Programs Manager at the Australian Institute for Machine Learning, and hosted by the co-founders of AiLab, [Dr John Flackett](#) and Emma Berry.

"We're extremely honoured and lucky to have had two of the most respected robotics experts in Australia travel interstate to share their wealth of knowledge with an enthusiastic SA audience. The current interest in AI is unprecedented and it was brilliant to hear about what new opportunities exist when pairing AI with the latest in advanced robotics," said Head of AiLab, Dr. John Flackett.



Event speakers Nicci Rossouw, Dr Sue Keay, and Ali Anderson.

How effectively are we going to respond to these opportunities and challenges here in Adelaide? Dr Keay sees reasons to be optimistic, "It was impressive to see the size of the AI and Robotics community in South Australia along with the clear support from all levels of SA government. All signs that bode well for SA's AI future".

"It was also fantastic to witness first-hand the community-building work being done AiLab, which is a great resource for the state and shows how important it is to have connectors with a focus on new technology development to support the ecosystem. From start-ups to developers, users, hobbyists and the interested public, AiLab provides a range of events and services that help everyone to embrace the new AI age," said Dr. Keay.

In addition to the event, AiLab also arranged a 'Robotics and AI Roundtable' with Dr. Sue Keay. This was a unique opportunity for key South Australian stakeholders to hear about the plans for version two of Australia's robotics roadmap directly from Dr. Keay. This roundtable event is the catalyst with AiLab as the conduit, for further discussions in the state around Artificial Intelligence, Robotics and other enabling technologies.

We're very fortunate to have organisations like AiLab and AIML spreading innovation here in Adelaide, along with the ongoing support of the City of Adelaide.

Through initiatives like [Ten Gigabit Adelaide](#), the City of Adelaide gives more businesses access to the competitive advantages that technology can bring.

It's up to those of us in business to embrace these opportunities, and take up the challenge of transforming Adelaide into the global leader in technology and innovation that we can become.

[Campbell Davis](#) is a management consultant who provides practical advice and support to Adelaide businesses looking to leverage technology to improve their operations. You can learn more about Campbell's services at his website: [confidentpathconsulting.com.au](#).



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