

# Focus.

Supporting  
business success in  
South Australia

December 2019

## All eyes on high-tech industries of the future





# Welcome.

Welcome to the December 2019 edition of BankSA's *Focus* magazine.

Technology has the power to do many things, including changing South Australia's economic base.

The emergence of new technologies such as machine learning, artificial intelligence and blockchain present enormous opportunities. This will be particularly so for bold cities and states around the world who embrace these future industries early to grow their economies.

In this issue of *Focus*, we look at what the future may hold for South Australia, from the industry sectors with high growth potential, through to the skills that our workforce will need for local businesses to capitalise on the new opportunities at hand.

We also feature six BankSA customers who are embracing innovation and technology across a range of different industries.

Consilium Technology is a great example of homegrown innovation, with their growing team of Adelaide-based data scientists and software engineers helping companies around the world take their businesses to the next level through new technologies.

We look at how leading aged care provider ECH is using modern technology to help people live independently in their own homes for longer, and how local packaging specialist HMPS has become one of Australia's leading machine building companies.

South Australian building company, Adelaide Green Homes, gives us an insight into its plans to fast-track the future of homebuilding. While Tarac Technologies shows us how it is repurposing waste in the global wine industry.

It's also fantastic to see how our next generation are being prepared for the workforce of tomorrow at St Michael's College.

All of these stories highlight the opportunity for us to lead in harnessing technology to create new and better ways of doing things.

At BankSA, we've also adopted a new artificial intelligence tool called 'Astro' – featured in this edition of *Focus* – which is a virtual assistant for our lenders. Astro provides instant access to important information so we can provide quicker outcomes for customers.

The emergence of new technologies and the increasing use of data can be a key driver of growth. South Australia has the opportunity to differentiate ourselves and be recognised as a leader globally.

I hope you enjoy reading!

Best regards,

**Nick Reade**  
Chief Executive

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# Opportunity knocks to embrace industries of the future.



**There is little doubt that technology and information-based industries will be a key to Australia's economic future.**

The evolution of the internet shows that the web is expanding its influence into almost every field of endeavour, from driverless mining vehicles and satellite navigated farm machinery to robotic surgeons and 3D printed houses.

With the next wave of smart technology coming through – including blockchain, machine learning, artificial intelligence and big data analytics – a major opportunity exists for South Australia to become an economic beneficiary of such technologies by pursuing them as the state's industries of the future.

And the good news for South Australia is that the first building blocks are already in place through initiatives such as the Lot Fourteen precinct to attract entrepreneurs and innovative businesses, and the emergence of GigCity precincts across the state that are providing low-cost access to ultra-fast high-speed internet.

Encouragingly, the seeds of these

opportunities also include recent major announcements of the Australian Space Agency, the Australian Institute for Machine Learning, and the Living Lab with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which BankSA has helped enable as principal partner.

The potential for South Australia is enormous, and importantly, plans to pursue these high-tech industries of the future have the overwhelming support of South Australians, who stand to play a key role.

In fact, according to a new report by BankSA – based on an independent statewide survey of 300 consumers and 300 small business owners and managers – the vast majority of South Australians are in favour of embracing new technologies to supplement the state's traditional industry base in agriculture, mining and professional services.

Among the key findings of BankSA's 'Future Industries' special report are that 92% of businesses and 80% of consumers believe technological innovation and change are necessary if South Australia's economy is

**“There is overwhelming recognition that a wholesale shift in our economic base is needed if we are to have a strong economic future, but in order to achieve this, we need to re-train and upskill our current workforce and educate the next generation.”**

**Nick Reade**  
Chief Executive, BankSA



to have a strong future.

However, the survey also uncovered a skills deficiency that the state must address in order to reap the benefits of a technology-fuelled economy.

While the vast majority of South Australians believe they are adequately prepared with “soft skills” around creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and emotional intelligence, there is a recognised shortfall in “technical skills”.

For example, while 81% of consumers think new skills are needed by industry, 44% admit they are not prepared when it comes to their working knowledge of tech-enabled tools and techniques.

To that end, the survey also showed that 78% of businesses and 74% of consumers believe incentives should be offered to re-educate and upskill South Australians to enable them to participate in future industries, while 84% of businesses and 75% of consumers think there should be greater emphasis on the teaching of STEM subjects in primary and secondary schools.

Overall, both consumers and businesses agree that the top three most important ways to help South Australia be competitive in the global economy of the future are investing in the right education for the next generation of young South Australians; re-educating and upskilling

the current South Australian workforce and those who are able/willing to work; and making the state a low cost and attractive place for business to invest and operate.

While South Australia’s defence, health and medical research, and creative industries are widely recognised as key growth industries for the state, the report also highlights new industry sectors with strong potential for growth, including renewable and clean energy, advanced manufacturing, information technology, and robotics, machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Cyber security and recycling and waste management are also perceived as potential growth industries, however South Australians are less confident about the future prospects of the state’s product manufacturing and construction sectors.

Nick Reade, Chief Executive of BankSA, agrees that there are plenty of opportunities for South Australia to embrace technology and reap the economic rewards, but like the majority of respondents in the survey, says the state must have a plan.

“The opportunities are there, but we need a strategic plan,” he said.

“As part of this, major investment in education and skills training is absolutely critical if South Australia is to succeed in these new industries.

“We’re still going to rely heavily on our traditionally strong industries such as agriculture, mining and professional services, but these sectors aren’t going to be enough for the future.

“And nor will individual entrepreneurship and enterprise, so State Government and industry-level support and guidance will be vital for the state to successfully transition from commodities and services to also include technology-driven innovation.

“The bottom line is we have to plan for the future and be prepared to innovate and take risks, which is going to take a lot of courage and effort from governments and businesses through to individual members of the South Australian workforce.

“Ultimately, as a state, there is overwhelming recognition that modern technology can transform our economy by helping current and new industries evolve and prosper.

“But in order to achieve this, we need to re-train and upskill our current workforce and educate the next generation accordingly, or risk being left behind.”



# Facilitating business innovation.

**We live in an age of innovation where bold businesses are being rewarded for exploring and implementing modern and exciting ways of doing things.**

Digital technology in particular is serving to disrupt almost every industry sector no matter where you look around the world, with new and better processes and systems leading to more innovative products and services from businesses in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

It's certainly a rapidly changing business environment that we are currently in, however embracing change and disrupting the status quo is often much easier said than done, and usually takes courage.

For most organisations, it also usually takes a support network to help a business facilitate ambitious growth plans, which is something we pride ourselves on at BankSA.

We have innovation in our DNA at BankSA which helps us understand our business customers, not only via the lending support we provide, but through the expert advice we give to help businesses identify areas of opportunity and flag potential pain points.

We're passionate about working with South Australian businesses. We pride ourselves on getting to know the business owners and managers we partner with, and the industries in which they operate.

To that end, we're the only bank in South Australia which has dedicated business banking specialists for specific industry sectors, including health, hospitality, property, professional services, consumer and transport, agribusiness, manufacturing and wholesale.

This allows our business bankers to fully immerse themselves in an industry sector, which enables them to provide tailored solutions to help customers grow their businesses, and ultimately, the South Australian economy.

Warm wishes,

**David Firth**  
General Manager Corporate & Commercial Banking

## Top 5 companies

Did you know that the top five companies by market capitalisation in the US are all technology companies, in contrast to Australia which is still dominated by traditional mining companies and banks?

### USA



- Microsoft
- Amazon
- Apple
- Google
- Facebook

### AUSTRALIA



- BHP
- Rio Tinto
- Commonwealth Bank
- Westpac
- ANZ





# Leading the way with machine learning.

## Artificial intelligence used to be a futuristic concept largely confined to science fiction movies.

But the ability of machines to mimic human behaviour is now increasingly commonplace, with pioneering companies like Adelaide-based Consilium Technology helping more and more organisations harness cutting-edge technology to grow their businesses.

Consilium Technology Chief Executive Officer Seth Thuraisingham says while most people think of applications such as Siri, GPS and driverless vehicles when it comes to artificial intelligence, these are just the tip of the AI iceberg.

“Our business was founded on the needs of the defence industry, and we’re now helping bring cutting-edge technology to a range of other industry sectors, including manufacturing, mining and agriculture,” said Mr Thuraisingham.

“With our team of data scientists and software engineers, we partner with businesses to help them embrace new technology and capitalise on the vast opportunities afforded by artificial intelligence, machine learning, modelling and simulation, big data analytics and software engineering.

“Ultimately, our expertise in artificial intelligence enables us to unpack the fear of an uncertain future for our customers and help them reveal what lies beyond the horizon.”

A software engineer himself, Mr

Thuraisingham sowed the seeds for Consilium Technology back in 2010 after identifying an opportunity in the local defence industry. From there, he built a small team to develop the company’s machine learning capability – a team that has now grown to 40 staff and rising.

The company’s trailblazing products include its revolutionary agtech product GAIA, which uses high resolution satellite images and machine learning to detect, map and monitor high-value crops. In a world first, GAIA provided new vineyard insights to the wine industry by identifying and mapping every vine row in Australia.

“GAIA is a cloud-based, automated solution helping wineries make better strategic decisions to manage their vineyards, including how to apply resources more effectively – such as fertilisers – to reduce input costs and increase their bottom line,” said Mr Thuraisingham.

Consilium Technology has also developed multi-spectral simulation software in partnership with the Defence Science Technology, called Infinite Studio. The software creates real-time radiometrically credible simulation of imagery across the visible and infrared spectrum.

“Infinite Studio is the result of over 10 years of defence research and development. We have the exclusive licence to make this impressive defence capability available to industry, which can be used for a wide range of virtual,

constructive and hardware-in-the-loop simulation activities,” he said.


“We are also creating artificial intelligence solutions for the mining industry. For example, preventing unplanned mine shutdowns by estimating the remaining life of critical equipment, and recommending the best process control decisions to maximise plant efficiency.”

Mr Thuraisingham says BankSA has played an important role in the company’s development, including a willingness to take measured risks where other banks wouldn’t.

“When it comes to technology, the opportunities are huge but so many businesses have little or no idea about what is coming or what is possible. Our role here at Consilium Technology is to help our customers navigate the future and make data-driven decisions to seek or retain their competitive advantage,” he said.

## Exporting AI.

**Consilium Technology has entered the UK and US markets and is currently exploring new export opportunities in Europe, particularly for its GAIA product in Italy, France and Spain.**

A man in a dark blue suit, white shirt, and patterned tie is smiling and sitting in a chair. Behind him is a large screen displaying a map of Australia with various colored overlays, possibly representing weather or data. The man is looking towards the camera.

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**“Our expertise in artificial intelligence enables us to unpack the fear of an uncertain future for our customers and help them reveal what lies beyond the horizon.”**

**Seth Thuraisingham  
Consilium Technology  
Chief Executive Officer**





# There's no place like green homes.

**Sustainable homebuilding is often seen as more expensive than conventional building, but a new South Australian company is aiming to quash that theory by making environmentally-friendly homes attainable for everyone.**

Adelaide Green Homes has set out to fast-track the future of homebuilding, which it believes will revolve increasingly around smart, sustainable design that is not only better for the planet, but better for people's hip pockets too.

"Green homes have traditionally cost a lot of money to build, but that's all changing," said Daniel Morton, Director of Adelaide Green Homes.

"We've developed some innovative new approaches to the way a home should be built, which is enabling us to design and construct new homes that are both beautiful and environmentally conscious.

"For example, the sun is free and so is the wind, so we use them to guide the design of a home as much as possible.

"We've also adopted a more sustainable walling system for our homes that has a lower carbon footprint, while things such as double-glazed windows, solar panels and Clipsal smart home systems are considered standard.

"Through the sustainable building techniques we've implemented and the

industry partnerships we've established, we're able to design and build top quality green homes at a lower cost."

Adelaide Green Homes manages every home build through a designated mobile app, which serves as a convenient central point of contact for project managers, sub-contractors and clients, who are able to quickly and easily communicate with each other on construction scheduling and updates.

Mr Morton, who runs Adelaide Green Homes alongside fellow Director Rebecca Robinson, says the company's modern approach to homebuilding has been extremely well received so far.

"We blend modern technology and our green construction philosophies in everything we do," he said.

"We've also just launched our first display home at Morphettville, and we're already planning a second display home which is exciting."

With seven staff and ongoing partnerships with a team of preferred sub-contractors, Adelaide Green Homes is on track to complete 60 homes in 2019, with a goal to be building 100 homes a year by 2022.

"Our target market is generally second and third homebuyers who want to live in a modern, sustainable home, however we do have a lot of first homebuyers as well," said Mr Morton, adding that homes generally range from \$180,000 to \$400,000 to

design and build, including single and double storey residences.

"With power costs continuing to soar, more and more people are seeing the financial benefits of going green, not just the environmental benefits. In fact, if done correctly, you don't need to be paying power bills at all, which is something we love helping our clients achieve."

Mr Morton, a long-standing customer of BankSA, says the company's ultimate aim is to provide better homes for South Australians that enhance health and happiness.

"We pride ourselves on building goodness, which is a bit of a catchcry of the business," he said.

"We build goodness not only through the physical building process, but through the way we advise, educate and empower our clients to design and construct a sustainable home with as little stress as possible."

## Display home open.

**Adelaide Green Homes' first display home is now open at 62 Nilpena Avenue, Morphettville. Drop in on Saturdays between 10am-4pm.**



“Green homes have traditionally cost a lot of money to build, but that’s all changing.”

Daniel Morton  
Adelaide Green Homes Director



Adelaide  
Green  
Homes

Open Saturday  
10am – 4pm





# Good things come in automated packages.

**The chance to develop a piece of ground-breaking packaging machinery for South Australian winery Yalumba back in 1980 has led to one of the state's great unsung businesses, HMPS.**

After engineering an automated bag-in-box packaging system for Yalumba to process its wine casks nearly 40 years ago, HMPS – which stands for Hot Melt Packaging Systems – has evolved to become one of Australia's premier machine building companies.

Based at Adelaide Airport, HMPS designs and engineers robotic and automation machinery to suit the specific packaging needs of its customers, primarily businesses in the food and beverage industry.

HMPS Director Mark Emmett says a bespoke approach to developing packaging machinery enables the company to remain nimble and quickly respond to changing market conditions and customer needs.

"We're proud to be one of the few Australian companies in the packaging industry and to have continually led the way in the development and manufacture of high quality, high value machinery for the automation of carton packaging processes," said Mr Emmett.

"We have a team of 40 staff all based in Adelaide, including CAD designers, electricians, technicians, engineers and apprentices, who pride themselves on

continuously researching and developing new ways to meet the changing product lines and requirements of our clients and their consumers."

Mr Emmett says HMPS builds 40 machines a year on average for clients nationally, as well as in New Zealand and across South East Asia.

"We've been based in Adelaide for nearly 40 years and love serving national and international clients from here," he said.

"Today, 80% of our business comes from the eastern states and New Zealand, with approximately 20% coming from South East Asia, which we see as a growing market.

"In fact, we forecast that in five years' time, up to 50% of our business will come from South East Asia, predominantly due to the region's growing appetite for the premium food and beverages we produce down here in Australia."

To ensure it remains at the forefront of technology, HMPS spends approximately 20% of its annual turnover on research and development, while continually upskilling staff to create better packaging systems and efficiencies for customers.

"Technology changes so rapidly, so it's vital that we keep our finger on the pulse when it comes to the latest in robotics and advanced engineering," said Mr Emmett.

"Our technological expertise across the team is extremely high, but we're always

looking to learn and do things better for our customers.

"For example, we're currently developing our capability with collaborative robots – or cobots as they're otherwise known – which will enable us to further streamline the packaging process and create even greater efficiencies for our customers.

"And despite what some people say, cobots and other similar automated technologies aren't being introduced to the detriment of physical jobs. In fact, they often help create jobs.

"For example, before the advent of earthmoving machinery, there were just people with shovels. While there isn't such a demand for people to shovel in today's day and age, people are still needed to operate, maintain, repair or transport the earthmoving machinery.

"So while technology continues to evolve and change the way we all do business, the jobs are still there, it's just that the required skills are different."

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## **Electrolux win.**

**HMPS recently secured a major contract with Electrolux – one of the world's leading appliance makers – in a massive coup for the company against international competitors.**





**“Technology changes so rapidly, so it’s vital that we keep our finger on the pulse when it comes to the latest in robotics and advanced engineering.”**

**Mark Emmett**  
HMPS Director





# Making its marc on wine industry.

**Not only do Australia's 2,500 wineries produce approximately 1.5 million tonnes of grapes annually to make over one billion litres of wine, they produce an enormous amount of waste every year too.**

Enter Tarac Technologies.

A highly regarded silent achiever of the wine industry in Australia and globally, Tarac Technologies specialises in turning winery by-products into value add products, playing an integral role in the industry's sustainability.

With its head office, distillery and a production facility based in Nuriootpa in South Australia's Barossa Valley, the company also operates sites in other key winemaking areas, namely Berri in the state's Riverland and Griffith in NSW, where it helps wineries tackle environmental issues through the disposal, treatment and re-use of solid and liquid winemaking residuals.

In fact, Tarac Technologies currently treats over 135,000 tonnes of grape marc (the solid remains of grapes after pressing), more than 40 million litres of liquid waste and 7,000 tonnes of solid waste annually.

It does this via a closed-loop system whereby solid waste from wineries is treated to recover grape alcohol, brandy spirit and tartrates for natural tartaric production – all of which are returned to the wine industry.

Other solid waste is treated and turned into stockfeed products for farms and feed lots,

as well as soil conditioners for horticulture purposes. Liquid waste is processed at Tarac's wastewater treatment facility at Nuriootpa and re-used for its own processes or supplied to nearby vineyards for irrigation.

Tarac Technologies Chief Executive Officer Jeremy Blanks says the company is proud of its standing as a small yet important player in the global wine industry.

"Wineries produce a lot of waste but we're able to repurpose around 90% of it, which solves what would otherwise be a significant and expensive problem for the industry," he said.

"By recycling and re-using by-products, we're able to provide a valuable service to the wine industry, while also helping conserve the environment."

Established in 1930, Tarac also provides several other products and services to the wine industry, including GrapEX natural grape seed and skin tannins, natural tartaric acid, grape juice concentrate, AlcoTECH alcohol adjustment and a grape juice concentration service.

"We continue to invest heavily in research and development activities to ensure we're continually innovating and getting more from raw materials," said Mr Blanks.

"While our focus is largely on the wine industry – both domestically and internationally – we've broadened our reach over the years to also supply products to food, homeopathy and naturopathy

businesses, as well as craft distilleries. In fact, we currently service more than 60 craft distilleries.

"We've also just completed a year-long trial with South Australia's abalone industry for a new type of aquaculture feed using grape marc."

Employing 65 staff, Tarac also operates a property division, Tarac Properties, and owns two significant sites: Beckwith Park in the Barossa Valley and the former Accolade Wines property at Old Reynella.

Tarac also remains a long-standing customer of BankSA: "While we service national and international customers, we're a proud South Australian organisation like BankSA, who we've been banking with for a long time," said Mr Blanks.

"They've supported us through difficult times and are now with us through our current growth period, which is really reassuring. BankSA understands our business and is willing to think outside the square, which is important for us as we continue to look at new ways to innovate and grow."

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## Major milestone ahead.

**Since being established by ex-CSIRO scientist Alfred Allen in 1930, Tarac Technologies has developed an enviable reputation within the wine industry and will next year celebrate its 90th anniversary.**



**“Wineries produce a lot of waste but we’re able to repurpose around 90% of it, which solves what would otherwise be a significant and expensive problem for the industry.”**

Jeremy Blanks  
Tarac Technologies Chief Executive Officer







# Educating workers of the future.

**From chalky blackboards and frayed textbooks to interactive whiteboards and shiny iPads, school classrooms have certainly evolved over the years. Teachers are now educating students to meet the demands of the modern world.**

St Michael's College is a case in point where 1,840 students from Reception to Year 12 are exposed to a range of contemporary subjects and teaching methods to help prepare them for the workforce of tomorrow.

In addition to traditional subjects focusing on literacy and numeracy, the College gives students the chance to explore new-age subjects such as robotics, coding and computer-aided design.

It has also implemented an Integrated Learning Technology (ILT) program designed to help students develop modern-day skills and effectively utilise new technologies to improve learning outcomes.

For example, every student is given a tablet computer or similar digital device, while the College has adopted a web-based learning management system called SEQTA, which enables teachers, students and parents to collaborate more effectively online to establish better teaching and learning opportunities.

Principal John Foley says the College prides itself on being responsive to the changing demands of a modern, forward-looking

education system.

"Our role is to prepare young people for the future and help them be the best they can be," he said.

"We do this in a number of ways, including the subjects we teach and the way we teach them, while our ILT program enables students to seamlessly engage with an information-rich world.

"In educating our students, we certainly need to consider what businesses of the future will be looking for, and accordingly, empower our students to learn to help give them better options."

Established by the De La Salle Brothers at Beverley in 1954 to provide an additional Catholic education option in Adelaide's western suburbs, St Michael's opened a second campus at Henley Beach in 1967, with both still operating successfully today under the guidance of 240 staff.

Originally an all-boys school, St Michael's is now a co-education college for Year 7-12 students, with the primary campus about to follow suit to coincide with a major upgrade of facilities that is currently underway.

"We've embraced a new structure at St Michael's to help us deliver on our overarching goal to provide a quality education and future pathway for all," said Mr Foley, who said the College has banked with BankSA for more than 20 years.

"Our aspiration is to give students better choices and empower them to choose who

they want to be as people, learners and leaders in an ever-changing world.

"The workforce of the future will continue to change, so our role as a College is to instil confidence in our students to explore their curiosities and help them flourish as young men and women to fully realise their potential.

"We want to encourage creativity, innovation, curiosity and critical thinking among all of our students, with the ultimate aim of fostering the next generation of problem-solvers. Significantly, we also help students become resilient, team-oriented and socially aware people, which is really important."

## Solar school.

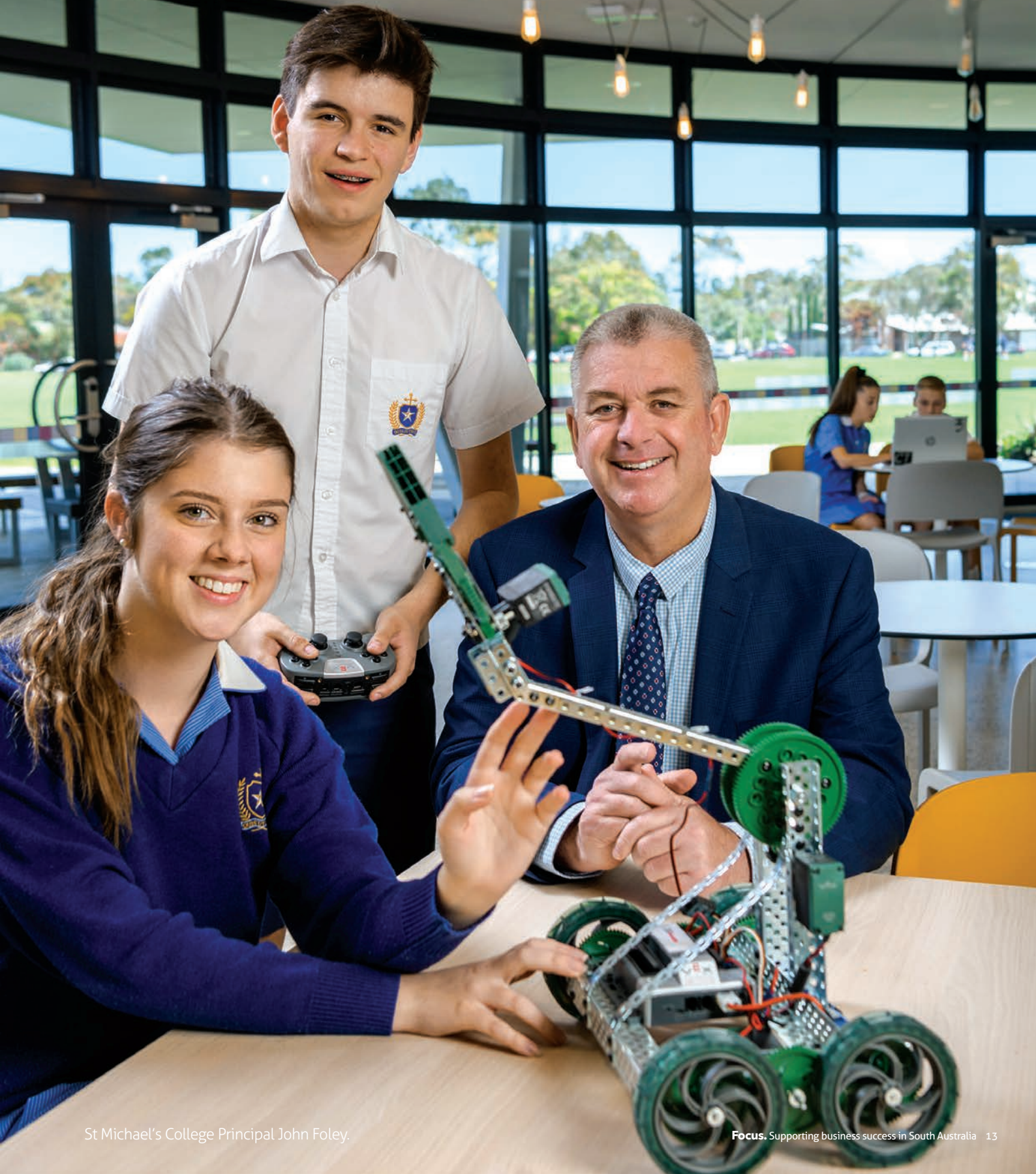
**St Michael's College recently installed a 250kW solar system and upgraded classroom lighting across its Beverley and Henley Beach campuses to reduce the school's electricity consumption and carbon emissions by 45%.**



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**“Our role is to prepare young people for the future.”**

**John Foley**  
St Michael's College Principal





# Aged care leader senses opportunity.

## Modern technology is steadily pervading all areas of life and the aged care sector is no exception.

As one of South Australia's largest providers of quality independent retirement village living and ageing care services, ECH (Enabling Confidence at Home) has embraced modern technology to help it deliver on its primary goal to support people to live independently at home as they age.

The not-for-profit organisation has invested in a revolutionary activity tracking system called 'Billy', which records the movements of older people in their own homes to give their families peace of mind that they are maintaining their daily routines.

ECH Chief Executive Dr David Panter says Billy uses data from motion sensors to recognise, learn and monitor a person's routine patterns of behaviour within their home, which can then be shared with family members and care providers via a smartphone app.

"We're constantly looking at new ways to help people remain in their homes for longer as they age, and Billy is one of those new ways," said Dr Panter.

"Through analysis of data, Billy knows when an occupant has moved throughout their home, opened the fridge or lifted their medication container. Over time, Billy builds up a strong profile of a person's usual routine, and makes it easier to identify changes to this routine for both the family and the care provider.

"Other monitoring technologies can be quite intrusive and invade privacy by requiring the use of cameras and wearable devices – whereas Billy is very discreet and works through information received via motion sensors placed around the home.

"It provides families with visibility, and consequently peace of mind, that daily routines are being undertaken, while care providers like ECH can analyse the data to monitor changes to behaviour that may then require adjustments to the individual's care plan and services."

Dr Panter says the initial feedback from ECH clients to Billy has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Billy is different from other home monitoring systems because it focuses on prevention rather than emergency response. Its use of artificial intelligence allows the identification of changes in behaviour over time and enables deeper conversations to occur between us and the client, or between the client and their family," he said.

Established in 1964, ECH currently employs 750 staff and volunteers – including nurses, home support staff, allied health professionals and administrators – who support the aged care needs of more than 15,000 South Australians.

ECH currently has 1,693 independent living units across 105 retirement villages throughout metropolitan Adelaide, the Adelaide Hills, Victor Harbor and Ardrossan,

as well as four wellness centres, five dementia-friendly day programs and a custom-designed short term care and respite centre.

It is also on the verge of constructing a new \$42.5 million apartment-style retirement village at Modbury, which has been designed to challenge the traditional retirement living model.

"Our Modbury development will include 77 apartments, a gym, café, allied health services and an early learning centre," said Dr Panter, who praised BankSA for its support of such projects and "incredibly responsive" service.

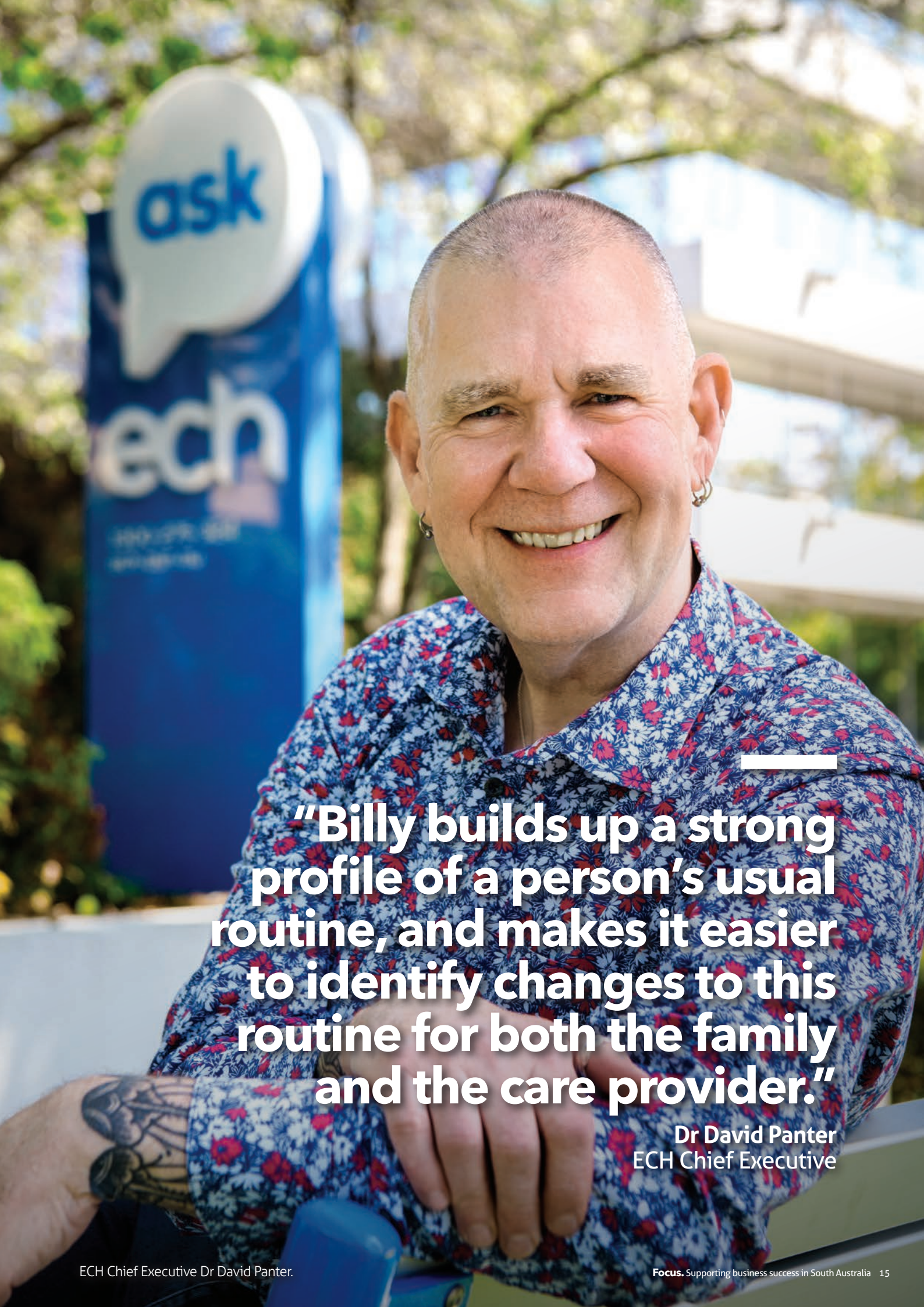
"More importantly, we have designed the village to encourage a neighbourly atmosphere where residents have a sense of belonging, which is a vital ingredient for anyone wanting to live independently and enjoy life for as long as possible as they get older."

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## Helping people age well.

**ECH is a registered Australian charity established for the benefit of its clients, with all profits reinvested to increase and improve the services it provides ageing South Australians.**





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**“Billy builds up a strong profile of a person’s usual routine, and makes it easier to identify changes to this routine for both the family and the care provider.”**

**Dr David Panter**  
ECH Chief Executive





BankSA Artificial Intelligence specialists.

# BankSA adopts AI to boost service.

**An ongoing commitment to provide customers with the highest level of service has led BankSA to adopt a new artificial intelligence tool called 'Astro' – a virtual assistant which enables bank staff to access instant, on-demand information to help them quickly address customer enquiries.**

Following a successful pilot program, BankSA has equipped its home lending team with Astro to assist them answer complex customer questions in real-time.

Greg Bennetts, BankSA Product Owner for Artificial Intelligence in its consumer technology division, says Astro utilises the IBM Watson Machine Learning and Natural Language Understanding to give staff a valuable knowledge resource at their fingertips.

"Astro is an intelligence tool which ensures

that BankSA staff are equipped with the right knowledge to answer customer queries quickly and correctly," said Mr Bennetts, who oversees a team of five AI specialists at BankSA.

"For example, a BankSA home loan expert may be speaking to a customer who asks a question about regulations regarding home loan guarantors. The staff member can then type the question into Astro while still talking to the customer, before providing a detailed response that is accurate and compliant with any regulatory considerations."

Significantly, Astro is continuously learning, so the more questions the system is asked, the more it learns and the more helpful it becomes.

Mr Bennetts said BankSA is currently developing Astro further to add other capabilities for staff, including human

resources and technology expertise.

"Astro is set to be rolled out to all BankSA staff which is really exciting," he said, adding that the platform is very intuitive to use for people of all technical skill levels.

"You can ask a question in your own words and Astro will find you the answer. Not only will this AI technology make staff members' roles easier by giving them quicker access to information relevant to their respective roles, but it will boost the customer experience, which is what has driven our exploration in this space.

"Ultimately, we want our staff to be able to satisfy customer queries as efficiently as possible, and with a handy new tool like Astro at their disposal, they'll certainly be able to do this."





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Working with  
you to build a  
**better future.**

 BankSA Industry Specialists

## Focus. December 2019

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