



AUSTRALIAN STEEL INSTITUTE

MEDIA RELEASE

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Success of manufacturing depends on AI and robotics, national steel convention will hear

The future success of Australia's manufacturing industries is dependent on accelerated investment in artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, the Australian Steel Institute (ASI) annual national convention in Brisbane will hear.

AI and robotics not only save time, but also potentially save lives by minimising human error and ensuring a safer working environment, Professor Cori Stewart's *Finding Your Productivity Edge with Robots and AI* presentation on September 10 will argue.

Significantly, AI and robotics accelerate the creation of novel capabilities and the potential to create a step change in Australia's global competitiveness.

Professor Stewart is the founder and CEO of the Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM) Hub, Australia's leading artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and design-for-manufacture industry innovation hub. She is helping drive productivity in Australian manufacturing through technology commercialisation using AI and robotics.

"In the highly competitive steel industry, AI and automation is helping Australia realise business growth and competitiveness, commercialise research and development, address skills shortages, and compete in an economy that is rapidly decarbonizing, Professor Stewart said.

Professor Stewart said continued growth in the manufacturing industry including steel was likely because of the baked-in demand for green energy. However, accelerated AI and automation was required to ensure Australia's competitiveness.

"We want these technologies to be instrumental in creating higher-value products and services that are meeting customer demand. Australian productivity is the worst it has been in 60 years and that is clearly at the centre of our global competitiveness challenges. Currently Australia owns another poor productivity statistic that out of 38 developed countries we rank 35th in robot



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population density, and after some time declining these ranks we may be starting gradually to inch our way up. Getting ahead will require more than business as usual. It will require disruption and innovation. AI and robotics provide that opportunity.”

Professor Stewart said Australian successes in AI and robotics include Boeing Australia’s delivery of the Ghost Bat autonomous warfighting aircraft and the automation of more than 700 Caterpillar, Komatsu and Hitachi haulage trucks in the Pilbara mines.

“This is the kind of high-value, highly skilled industry Australia needs. We need it to back our steel industry and therefore we need to nurture our local tech capability. We also need to keep Australia’s data local and monetise its value here. When I travel overseas and visit manufacturers, one thing you don’t see is them giving their data away to other companies or other countries.”

Professor Stewart said manufacturing including steel must look up and down the value chain to drive productivity. “Often we hear about companies creating downstream value (how they create jobs or attract vocational education training (VET) educated staff or low skilled workers) and we also need to ask different questions about how to create upstream value using highly skilled jobs, jobs that may not even exist yet but will soon; indeed it means companies investing more in high-value skills and high-value products than they are likely to now.”

Professor Stewart will deliver her presentation at 9.40am Tuesday September 10 at the Pullman Brisbane King George Square. The September 8-10 *What it Takes: Sustainable Building and Infrastructure*-themed convention includes a panel discussion on Olympics opportunities for the Australian steel supply chain (September 10 at 12.10pm); traceability case studies; investing in climate transition assets; and nation building opportunities in renewable energy. Registrations for the convention are still open at <https://www.steel.org.au/news-and-events/convention-2024/>.

ASI is the peak industry body for the Australian steel industry, representing 500 companies and 5000 members. Founding members are BlueScope, InfraBuild, Liberty Primary Steel and Stramit Building Products. Locally produced steel generates more than 100,000 jobs and \$29b in annual revenue in Australia.

For more information on this press release, please contact ASI marketing and communications manager Steven Andrew on 0473 480 964 or stevena@steel.org.au. Media are invited to attend the Sept 9 and 10 speaker presentations. Steve can organise face-to-face interviews with Professor Stewart and other speakers.