

Brisbane's LYRO Robotics secures seed funding to build AI-powered pick and pack robots

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Imagine a future when useful workplace robots – robots that work alongside humans, able to see and understand the job at hand – are deployed on call-out duties in time-critical industries.

The future is now. [LYRO Robotics](#) is on the case developing the algorithms, vision systems, and grippers – 'the brain, eyes, and hand' – making the above vision a reality.

The Brisbane-based venture is an innovative spin-out from the [Australian Centre for Robotic Vision](#), a world-first research centre focused on expanding the real-world capabilities of robots, enabling them to 'see' and 'understand' like humans.

[LYRO](#) is commercialising its world-leading robotic picking and packing technology for deployment in Australia's warehouses, supply chains, and logistics operations.

Less than six months after incorporating LYRO Robotics, Managing Director and Co-founder [Dr Jürgen 'Juxi' Leitner](#) and his team are celebrating their first international investment partnership with Japan's Toyo Kanetsu.

The deep-tech investor, with interests in advancing artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT) and robotics, has recognised the value of the ambitious startup, injecting seed funding through its corporate venture capital fund, [Toyo Kanetsu Corporate Venture Fund II](#).

It marks the Japanese corporation's first investment in Australia after being connected with LYRO through Trade Investment Queensland (TIQ).

TIQ CEO Paul Martyn congratulated the company for its achievement.

"It's fantastic to see a young Queensland business securing investment from a major international company," he said.

"High-tech industries like robotics are a major focus of our trade and foreign direct investment strategy in Queensland, and it's incredibly rewarding for TIQ to facilitate initiatives like this that help diversify and advance Queensland's trade and investment profile."

For Dr Leitner, the initial funding is 'the first big step' in turning dream to reality, helping LYRO robots roll onto the job.

"We are designing our robots to seamlessly fit into existing factory operations, reducing the need for costly changes of existing workflows," Dr Leitner said.

"They aim to ensure smooth workflow, in particular helping businesses that struggle with labour shortages, especially around seasonal variance.

“Our robots are specifically designed to adapt and learn when working in new conditions and interacting with new items.”

Dr Leitner previously led the Australian Centre for Robotic Vision’s Manipulation and Vision research program before taking the leap into the world of startups with fellow Centre Research Fellow, [Dr Nicole Robinson](#), and former Research Student, [Mr Norton Kelly-Boxall](#).

LYRO Robotics was born after Dr Leitner led “Team ACRV” to [victory at the 2017 Amazon Robotics Challenge](#) in Japan with the only custom-built robot in the global competition.

“The bustle of such an international challenge, competing against top university teams as well as big calibre companies is hard to describe in words,” he said.

“It was eye-opening to see the most critical aspects in creating successful robots are integration of all parts, and a great team that knows how to integrate all these subsystems in the most optimal way.”

LYRO Robotics has also secured QUT robotics researcher, [Distinguished Professor Peter Corke](#), as Robotics Advisor. Professor Corke is an internationally recognised researcher and teacher in robotics, who founded the Australian Centre for Robotic Vision.

Professor Corke said innovative startups like LYRO Robotics, backed by extensive research know-how, were important to Australia’s fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0), where the physical and digital worlds collide.

“It is not enough for researchers to do fantastic, internationally impactful science if we fail to translate it into tangible benefits for end users in the real world,” Professor Corke said.

“So, it’s exciting to see Australian Centre for Robotic Vision researchers move forward with LYRO Robotics, and I’m proud to play an advisory role in the company’s future.”

Innovative startups are critical to the future of local ecosystems, and the catalyst behind the establishment of [QUT Entrepreneurship](#). “The focus on entrepreneurship is all about helping staff and students bring innovative ideas to life as ventures that create value for others,” Executive Director Professor Rowena Barrett said.

New and emerging technologies such as robotics are especially important for Australia. The Australian Centre for Robotic Vision, partnered with industry, researchers and government agencies to develop [Australia’s first Robotics Roadmap](#) (released June 2018). It contains a suite of recommendations on ways industry, government, educational institutions, investors and the wider public can better harness these technologies.

“The original idea behind developing the Roadmap was to help identify companies operating in the space of robotics and computer vision here in Australia to get a better sense of their operations and value to the economy,” Professor Corke said.

“Thanks to the Roadmap, we know that Australia has more than 1,100 companies operating in the robotics space, employing more than 50,000 people and generating more than \$12 billion in revenue to the economy.

“That’s something we want to continue to grow.”

According to a 2017 report commissioned by Google, [Australia has the potential to seize a trillion dollar opportunity](#), if automation is embraced. In Queensland alone, a quick uptake of robotics and AI technologies will create more than 700,000 jobs and a billion dollar boost to the economy over the next 10 years, according to a separate [report by Synergies Economic Consulting in collaboration with the Queensland Government and QUT](#).

Dr Leitner said his team at LYRO Robotics were excited to help lead the push, creating ‘the brains, eyes and hands’ for the next generation of truly useful robots.

“LYRO is one avenue to get the latest breakthrough in robotics and AI ‘out there’ – out of the Lab – to make a real difference,” he said.

“It is still early days for robotics. LYRO has a long-term vision with a pipeline of projects ranging from close to home all the way to out-of-this world applications – think, outer space!”

LYRO Robotics plans to use the Toyo Kanetsu Corporate Venture Investment Partnership seed funding to extend its team and deploy robots with an exclusive list of early adopters, while further developing globally competitive picking and packing solutions.

About LYRO Robotics

LYRO Robotics is an Australian robotics company, incorporated in August 2019. It leads the push to create intelligent robots for order fulfilment in warehouse and logistic scenarios in Australia. LYRO is creating ‘the brains, eyes and hands’ for the next generation of robots. It is in the business of developing state-of-the-art robotics, computer vision and artificial intelligence to visually identify, locate, pick and pack a large range of inventory stock.

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