



Professor: Ignore AI science at our peril

TORY SHEPHERD
STATE EDITOR

AUSTRALIA risks becoming a “digital banana republic” if it doesn’t embrace artificial intelligence, an Adelaide science expert says.

Professor Anton Van Den Hengel, pictured, said Australians may be worried about robots taking their jobs, but “the truth is AI creates jobs – thousands of them overseas, where other countries are spending billions of dollars on the industry”.

Prof Van Den Hengel is the director of the University of Adelaide’s Australian Institute for Machine Learning, an anchor tenant at Lot Fourteen.



He said the nation must engage with the technology or it will end up missing out on a huge opportunity.

“We will wind up a digital banana republic,” he said yesterday, referring to the political concept of countries become unstable because of reliance on a single, critical import.

The CSIRO has issued a discussion paper on the ethics of AI, examining its potential and its risks. It points to times when AI went rogue, such as a bot that turned racist after being released on Twitter, or flaws in systems used to judge criminals or to advise health officials.

The CSIRO says Australia must make sure that AI deliv-

ers benefits greater than the cost; does no harm; complies with laws and regulations; protects privacy; is fair and transparent, as well as accountable and subject to human challenges.

“Australia needs to engage in this technology,” Prof Van Den Hengel told *The Advertiser*, warning that otherwise it will end up dependent on importing the technology.

PAGE 21: ISSUES