

Briefcase: Business snippets from around SA

BUSINESS

In this week's briefcase, four SA space companies have joined forces to prepare for a local rocket launch, plans have been lodged for a \$30 million health hub in Victor Harbor and the new Labor government reboots Invest SA.



A new SA space collaboration aims to launch a rocket from Eyre Peninsula. Photo: AAP/ADF/Sean Jorgensen-Day, DEWC

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Electronic warfare firm rebrands amid space joint venture

Mawson Lakes electronic warfare company DEWC Systems has rebranded as Asension in a bid to reflect the rapid evolution of its technology and capabilities.

DEWC Systems has a proud history of developing leading electronic warfare technology for the Australian Defence Force and has built a strong team of ex-Defence and ADF personnel together with leading graduate engineers.

The company also last week signed an MoU with three other SA space companies – Southern Launch, ATSpace Australia and Inovor Technologies – to potentially launch a rocket from Eyre Peninsula.

Each company brings a unique capability to the collaborative exploration which is designed to showcase and test Australian-made space technologies with the goal of enabling sovereign capabilities for the Australian Defence Force.

kilometres above Earth.

Onboard will be a mission-specific spacecraft designed and manufactured by Inovor Technologies. The Inovor Technologies spacecraft will interface with an electronic warfare payload designed and built by Asension.

While approvals are still required from the Australian Space Agency, the mission is only being made possible through a collaborative effort, each company having its own mission goals.

Southern Launch Chief Executive Officer Lloyd Damp said the collaboration highlighted the importance of South Australian sovereign capability.

“This MoU brings four space companies together to develop an Australian first, a sovereign end-to-end space capability covering payload development, rocket manufacture, and launch into space,” he said.

Asension CEO Ian Spencer said the local collaboration highlighted the strength of the South Australian space industry.

“In South Australia, we are very fortunate to not only be home to the Australian Space Agency but to also have a growing ecosystem of space companies dedicated to the establishment and operation of a world-class and sovereign space industry capability,” he said.

“The space industry community within South Australia is vibrant, strong and collaborative in nature – this launch will demonstrate the power of this ability to collaborate and rapidly deploy Australian payload to space in Australian spacecraft from Australian soil.”

Graphene Sparcs new direction for Kent Town company

Listed South Australian company Sparc Technologies will move into the commercial manufacture of graphene-based additive products following successful trials.

The company says it has identified, trialled and ordered specialised manufacturing equipment and located a site.

The Kent Town-based business is also undertaking test work in specialist graphene coatings for the hydrogen sector.

Graphene can be extracted from graphite and can be imparted on products to improve performance.

Sparc managing director Mike Bartels said the path to commercialisation was now clear with detailed discussions progressing with global coatings companies.

“Sparc has been able to demonstrate its know-how in addressing industry acknowledged challenges in the production of homogenous graphene dispersion having developed a proprietary manufacturing process for the commercial manufacture of graphene-based additive products,” he said.

“Sparc is now poised to undertake the manufacture of graphene-based additives on a commercial scale supporting coatings companies generating significant revenue from products targeting anti-corrosive end uses.”

Sparc Technologies last month also formed a joint venture with the University of Adelaide and Fortescue Metals to deliver a process for producing commercially viable green hydrogen.

Known as Sparc Hydrogen, the entity will use green hydrogen technology developed by the University of Adelaide's Professor Greg Metha and team, and Flinders University.

Merger creates new player in AI and sensor market

The merger is being backed by leading Australian growth investor Pemba Capital Partners, supporting the new group's ambitious growth targets in a market where nine out of 10 Australian organisations are looking to implement AI solutions, and defence spending is expected to increase by more than 20 per cent over the next five years.

The founders say the synergies between elmTEK and Consilium make a natural alliance that will enable the new group to increase its scale and capabilities in the delivery of large defence and space programs, and other sectors such as agriculture, mining, logistics, energy and infrastructure.

"Over the past 10 years, we've proven ourselves and built a truly fantastic business focused on solving mission-critical problems at pace for defence and other customers," said elmTEK co-founder and Managing Director Ganen Ganeswaran.

"Our wish has always been to grow a sustainable and resilient business in South Australia, and this merger will allow us to continue on that trajectory."

Consilium Technology CEO Seth Thuraisingham said the new group's capabilities in sensors, simulation and AI were critical to solving defence challenges, improving productivity in agriculture and lowering costs and improving margins in medium to large enterprises.

"With growing global uncertainty in national security, food production and other social elements such as rising inflation and COVID-19 impacts, the strengthened capabilities through this merger will provide industries with tools to improve predictability," he said.

"Technology like AI and sensors are akin to prediction machines that can deliver competitive advantage against emerging threats in the defence environment, improved yields in agriculture and automated knowledge work in enterprise."

The new group, which will announce its new name and brand soon, will remain headquartered in South Australia, bolstering the state's growing defence industry and capability.

"Over 160 people, including scientists, mathematicians, and engineers, will be employed by the new entity, with further investment in developing a highly-skilled Australian workforce expected in the coming months and years," said Ganeswaran.

Chief Defence Scientist Professor Tanya Monro said defence had an ongoing and successful working relationship with both Consilium and elmTEK.

"Previous Defence Science and Technology Group partnerships with both elmTEK and Consilium are great examples of Defence working alongside Australian Defence Industry to transfer ideas through to commercialisation," said Professor Monro.

Victor Harbor health hub on way



Image: supplied



health professionals, radiology, NDIS providers and other medical-related specialists and services.

The project, which is being developed by Leyton Property, will see the relocation of the nearby Victor Medical Centre.

Victor Medical Centre spokesman Justin Shute said the new health hub was crucial to delivering essential health care services for the local community.

“Health hubs such as we’re proposing are the changing face of Australian health care, particularly in mature and ageing communities,” he said.

“Bringing together general practitioners with collaborative medical specialists in one space not only makes sense but leads to better holistic health outcomes for our patients and clients.

“With the number one challenge confronting our medical practice being access to appointments for our patients, we hope this state-of-the-art-facility being developed by Leyton Property will help us attract much-needed additional quality doctors to serve the local community.”

The proposed development spans a land area of 4430 sqm – 1550 sqm for the GP clinic, 1450 sqm suitable for allied and specialist health and close to 100 car parks.

Subject only to approval by the City of Victor Harbor, work on the health hub is expected to start in early 2023 with completion expected by the end of 2024.

Leyton Property Managing Director Hamish Brown said the purpose-built health care asset would act as a catalyst for business confidence in the region.

“It is also an opportunity to design and deliver modern health care services to a community which we know has a pressing need in this area.

“With significant experience in delivering complex projects for other healthcare-related occupiers, Leyton Property is thrilled to be working with Victor Medical Centre to deliver this transformative project which will make a profound difference in the community including the creation of hundreds of jobs during construction.”

Labor re-boots Invest SA

The State Government has re-booted its dedicated investment attraction division, which was axed by the Liberals in 2018.

Originally launched as the Investment Attraction Agency in 2014 during the Labor Weatherill Government, the division is back following an election promise ahead of the March poll.

Invest SA has been established following the allocation of \$4.2 million in this month’s State Budget.

The budget also reinstated Brand South Australia after it too was axed by the Marshall government.

Invest SA has been re-established as a standalone division within the Department of Trade and Investment comprising a professional team of investment and business development professionals.

It aims to provide a platform for businesses to pitch to global audiences.

A new Invest SA website has already been launched to promote investment opportunities.

Minister for Trade and Investment Nick Champion said the division would provide a reinvigorated, focused and improved effort to growing South Australia through investment.

“Being embedded in the Department for Trade and Investment, Invest SA will be able link investments to export opportunities.”

Data hub to help drive education evolution

Data analytics specialists Exposé has been awarded a \$6.5 million SA Department for Education contract to deliver cloud-based capability for the next decade.

The edAnalytics Hub will allow education staff to create, access and share data solutions more quickly and accurately to better inform decisions on key investments and development initiatives.

The 10-year investment in data analytics aims to benefit future generations of South Australian public school students by ensuring world-leading information supports their education.

Department for Education Chief Information Officer Scott Bayliss said the project was a major step forward for the department.

“The edAnalytics Hub is designed to maximise the department’s capabilities in collection, monitoring, forecasting, reporting and analysis by improving and evolving the way our workforce and stakeholders interact with data,” he said.

“We have shifted towards cloud-based solutions and this project allows us to deliver advanced data analytic capabilities in public education at world-leading levels.”

Exposé is headquartered at Lot Fourteen. It started with a team of five in 2016 and has quickly grown to become South Australia’s largest data and analytics consultancy with about 40 staff in SA, an office in Melbourne and a national expansion plan to open in Brisbane later this year.

Exposé co-founder and General Manager Kelly Drewett said the innovative project would provide educational opportunities in data analytics from early learning right through to high school.

She said up to 20 additional staff would be employed in South Australia in the next couple of months to meet the growing demand in the data analytics space.

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“Exposé and Department for Education staff will work collaboratively to provide best of breed solutions and capabilities in data analytics to support public school students, now and into the future,” she said.

“We are aiming to attract and retain talent here in South Australia in the growing tech and data space and are looking to offer up to five traineeships per year for successful applicants through this partnership.”

Exposé will run the business-focused data analytics project in a public high school to encourage young women to choose a career in STEM.



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Women of America

OPINION

Abortion will be banned in many states and 'aiding and abetting' seeking one will likely be criminalised, with marginalised women to be most affected, argue **Erica Millar** and **Barbara Baird**.



Photo: AP/Andrew Harnik

In a post-Roe world, 26 US states are certain or likely to ban abortion and one quarter of abortion clinics are predicted to close. Indeed, many closed the day Roe was overruled.

With increasing ferocity over the past 15 years, abortion access in the US has been gradually eroded since the 1973 landmark Supreme Court ruling on Roe v Wade, through measures including the banning of federal funding for abortion, and state laws that enforce mandatory counselling and stringent licensing requirements for abortion clinics.

In 2021, states across the US introduced 663 abortion restrictions and enacted 108 of them, a record number in any year since 1973. One quarter of US abortion clinics closed between 2011-2016, and, as of early 2022, there were five states with only one clinic.

The erasure of the constitutional right to abortion will be felt most acutely in states with already dramatically reduced access. It will not result in a seismic shift in access but will accelerate a decades long process that is far from over for either anti-choice activists, or the pro-choice majority.

Ending Roe won't end abortions

Women have always circumvented restrictive abortion laws and, with the advent of medical abortion, it's never been safer to do so. Individuals can safely self-manage their abortion using oral medications.

Pregnant Americans living in states hostile to abortion rights are getting abortion pills online or via the telephone, or travelling to buy them elsewhere — in the pharmacies in cities just over the Texan-Mexican border, for example.

Of course, this is far from ideal — medical abortion is only recommended up to the twelfth week of pregnancy, and women should optimally have the choice of surgical or medical methods. Good information about medical abortion is key to its success and safety.

internet for example). Yet such measures will be difficult to enforce.

Forced pregnancies don't usually end in adoptions

It's estimated about one quarter of people who would have had an abortion under Roe will be forced to continue with a pregnancy post-Roe.

These pregnancies will, in about 90% of cases, lead to parenthood. Despite what the Supreme Court imagines, forced pregnancy, birth and parenthood, and not adoption, is generally the alternative to abortion.

Moreover, far from being "voluntary", adoption is, as legal scholar Dorothy Roberts writes, most often "forced upon politically marginalised people as a response to crises caused by race, class, and gender inequities".

The end of Roe will increase inequality

Forced pregnancy will further entrench existing inequalities. Wealthy Americans in states that will ban or restrict abortion will continue to have abortions because they will have the capacity and resources to travel interstate or access abortion pills online.

Three quarters of abortion seekers in the US are living in poverty. Black women get abortions at nearly three times the rate of white women, and a higher proportion of Black women live in states that will restrict or criminalise abortion.

Police will disproportionately target non-white people in laws criminalising abortion. Today, 38 states have laws that can be used to charge a woman for pregnancy outcomes, including charges related to drug addiction and accidental falls.

Of the 1,200 prosecutions under these laws over the past 15 years, 52% were against Black women.

Last year, Brittanay Poolaw, a 21-year-old Native American woman, went to hospital in Oklahoma seeking help for a miscarriage, and was charged and convicted of first-degree manslaughter of her unborn child.

The complications for medical abortion and miscarriage are identical. Seeking medical help in this context may work for white women, who will be less subject to medical-legal surveillance, but is likely to subject racial minorities to increased surveillance for miscarriage.

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Forced pregnancy increases poverty levels and takes a toll on children born and women's health, their well-being, and their relationships well into the future.

Continuing with a pregnancy and birth is always more dangerous than abortion, and these risks are greater for Black women, who die 3.5 times more often in birth and the postpartum period than white women. Deaths resulting from the failure to properly manage miscarriage are also very possible.

What now?

Responding to already restrictive contexts, US activists are organised to [maximise](#) and help [fund](#) abortion travel and self-managed care. With only [34% of the US population](#) supportive of the Supreme Court's decision, US pro-choice activists and organisations have significant force behind them.

Erica Millar, Senior research fellow, La Trobe University and Barbara Baird, Associate Professor, Flinders University

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