

Big data at the cutting edge

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SENSORS installed on Seeley International's domestic and globally located coolers are transmitting key information back to Adelaide that can now be used to improve design and efficiency of its products.

It's one example of the kind of hi-tech advantage at hand for industrial manufacturers like Seeley, electrical switchroom maker Mayfield Industries and oyster basket maker SEAPA – the three pilot adopters of a Big Data Connect Program, funded by the State Government and run by Mawson Lakes-based Federal Data To Decisions Cooperative Research Centre (D2D CRC).

Big data involves using technology to collect, organise and analyse large amounts of data from sources such as a customer survey, daily production information, smart sensors and machine readings to make better decisions.

D2D CRC's program lead Troy Wuttke said he hoped more companies would sign up to the program, which will start projects with two more successful applicants in coming months.

"With Seeley, we used the data collected by sensors installed on their commercial coolers around the world.

"We have built a centralised data platform for them that now collates all that information with relevant weather data, for instance.

"It's a new way of looking at data that can now help in possible future products and services for customers, giving them an advantage," he said.

Seeley International general manager Rob Gilbert said the program had helped expose the potential for databased opportunities.

"(It is) making us aware of analytics such as machine learning, which has the potential to improve performance and efficiency on a global scale," he said.

With Edinburgh-based Mayfield Industries – a supplier to major projects around Australia, including Nyrstar's Port Pirie smelter and Gina Rinehart's Roy Hill iron ore mine in WA – D2D CRC used internal data on previous tenders to build a system that enables quicker processing of new tenders and uses historic pricing information to more accurately price its bids.

“These are tasks that would probably take weeks for project managers, but using algorithms and estimations, we can transform internal knowledge into a real tool for businesses,” Mr Wuttke said.

Mayfield used the new information during a presentation to a new client, leading to a quick quotation request and preferred supplier status, general manager Chris Ware said.

SEAPA, which investigated big data solutions rather than have one developed, was recommended sources where it could find information to build a competitive advantage over other marine equipment suppliers for its oyster farming solutions.

We have built a centralised data platform for sensors installed in products around the world

D2D CRC'S PROGRAM LEAD TROY WUTTKE