

Dematec's bridging the gap

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Dematec Automation chief executive David Hart with an irrigation fitting cell at Philmac — showing the robotic system. Photo Naomi Jellicoe.

CLEVER Adelaide engineering company, Dematec Automation, is playing a key role in helping companies bridge the gap from traditional manufacturing to the new age of advanced manufacturing.

From its roots servicing the South Australian manufacturing sector, Dematec has grown its area of operations in the past 26 years, delivering projects and systems in both Australia and internationally.

The Melrose Park company has designed and installed systems for Australian companies in the United Kingdom, China, South Africa, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

But first it had to bridge the gap itself from a focus on traditional manufacturing towards advanced manufacturing and industrial control systems.

Dematec chief executive David Hart said its successful approach has led to a widening of the sectors in which it operates, the creation of new divisions and a wider service offering.

“Our customer base was biased toward traditional manufacturing so we made a conscious decision to diversify to sectors including water and infrastructure, defence, food and beverage production, advanced manufacturing, ports and utilities, oil and gas and agriculture,” Mr Hart said.

It has also started developing its own products such as a Critical Asset Protection System to monitor temperatures of high value assets across a large area to detect pending equipment failure and to provide autonomous perimeter intrusion detection.

A pilot system of this novel technology system is being installed by a Victorian electricity utility and Mr Hart said the company is very hopeful that it will have widespread uses for electrical utilities, in mining and waste heap combustion prevention.

A recipient of the 2014 Industry Leaders Fund, Mr Hart said the fund had been very positive for his work through undertaking further education and networking with future leaders, as well as training and growth seminars.

Dematec was founded in 1990 by Mark and Denise Stevens, whose ambition was to create and maintain a culture in which “the best team engineers the best solution”.

The Stevens still own Dematec along with Mr Hart and managing director Tim Bubb.

Applications for Dematec’s automation solutions include potable and wastewater process control systems, production equipment, monitoring for manufacturers and food producers and communication systems for remote plant and equipment.

“We’ve worked on a lot of intelligent automated systems for clients such as Philmac, Trility, Defence SA, Techno Plas and Goodman Fielder,” he said.

Dematec has delivered numerous automation projects in the past 20 years for clients such as Philmac including the implementation of its first robot system in the mid-1990s under the project management of the Centre of Advanced Manufacturing Research at the University of SA.

It then collaborated with Philmac’s internal engineering team and Adelaide mechanical designer Asytec, in the design and implementation of the more recent ‘intelligent robotic irrigation fitting assembly cells’.

“Dematec provided the overarching system controls, which manage the robots and vision systems, for four of these production cells — each incorporating five robots — at Philmac, which automatically assemble up to 900 variants of irrigation fittings in seven housing sizes,” he said.