

Tonsley groups must work as one on defence

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BRIGHT FUTURE: SAGE Automation CEO Adrian Fahey at the Tonsley Innovation Precinct. Picture: BIANCA DE MARCHI

TRAINING a tech-driven workforce and getting into the supply chain early will ensure the Tonsley precinct makes the most of the \$40 billion defence spend, leaders say.

SAGE Automation chief executive Adrian Fahey said Tonsley companies needed to work together to get ahead in the developing industry.

"Bringing together likeminded tech companies in a precinct like Tonsley encourages people to collaborate more into the defence industry," Mr Fahey said.

"We're certainly working hard to position

ourselves to be in the supply chain."

Mr Fahey added SAGE was partnering with TAFE SA and Flinders University to identify what skills students needed to be ready for a technology-driven workforce.

Flinders University professor John Spoehr said their naval architecture and ocean engineering degrees, business partnerships and a training agreement with aerospace company BAE Systems were preparing local students for jobs in defence.

"There are valuable longterm career opportunities for graduates," Prof Spoehr said.

He added those opportunities existed in engineering, robotics, autonomous systems, business management, freight logistics and international relations.

Tonsley's involvement in the defence industry would also set up surrounding suburbs for growth, according to Tonsley Precinct director Philipp Dautel, who said there was a potential for a residential boom. "Marion can offer an affordable lifestyle near the beach ... (and) schools, childcare or shopping precincts," Mr Dautel said.