

The Advertiser

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SA space companies shoot for the stars, aiming for a quadruple revenue increase by 2027

After last week's announcement SA companies will be involved in creating a rover to explore the Moon, local space companies predict a bright future for the industry.

Defence company Nova Systems expects to benefit from a booming space industry in SA, predicting it could quadruple its revenue over the next four years.

Nova chief executive Jim McDowell said the company was looking to grow in all areas of space, where it currently employs around 100 people and generates around \$50 million in revenue a year.

"It's not huge but it is significant," Mr McDowell said.

But he has greater ambitions for the company as the sector expands in SA.

"Why wouldn't you want it to be \$100 million in two years or \$200 million in four years," Mr McDowell said. "Those are the sort of goals you should set yourself. For us they are aspirational, but that's how you get things done."



Jim McDowell, CEO Nova Systems. .

This week, Nova Systems will complete a “historic” move from its ageing Mile End office to a new state-of-the-art headquarters on Pirie St in the CBD.

“Our Adelaide office move is a really exciting step forward for Nova Systems as we relocate into newer and more modern premises at a time when the business continues to rapidly expand in Australia – and across the world,” Mr McDowell said.

[Nova was part of the AROSE consortium](#), which was last week awarded a \$4 million federal grant to build a prototype semi-autonomous rover that could be part of NASA's mission to the Moon in 2026 when humans will set foot on the lunar surface for the first time since 1972.

AROSE and another consortium called EPE Lunar Outpost, which also has a South Australian element, were last week awarded \$4 million grants through the federal government's moon to Mars Trailblazer initiative. One of the consortiums will be chosen to build the rover that will be used on the Moon to collect soil samples that will be examined for oxygen content.

Mr McDowell said this type of government and private sector co-operation was vital to build a sustainable space sector. He compared it to the early days of the aerospace industry, where government development was taken up and commercialised by private industry.

"It's a true, public private partnership," he said.

Figures supplied by the State Government said the space industry added \$166 million to the SA economy and had grown at 64 per cent per annum for the last four years. It is expected the sector will grow at 5.8 per cent a year until 2030, adding another \$250 million to the SA economy.

[Adelaide satellite company Inovor Technologies](#) is currently negotiating to provide "lunar navigation" to the EPE Lunar Outpost consortium and its chief executive Matt Tetlow also said government support was vital to build the industry.

Mr Tetlow said too often in the past governments had elected to buy from overseas, instead of developing the local industry.

Mr Tetlow said SA companies in small satellites, internet of things, space domain awareness and sensor technologies "can kind of give us a really good outcome and kind of really unique in the world, or at least on par with kind of the best that's out there".

"There's a big pot of pot of money, let's direct it appropriately and give Australian industry a chance," he said. "If they do that, I think there's a whole lot of opportunities, particularly around those four pillars across 10 or 15 companies in South Australia and Australia generally, I think it really can really benefit."

