



04 AUG, 2023

## Mine data could lead AI sector

West Australian, Perth



Page 1 of 1

[Return to media item](#)

# Mine data could lead AI sector

**MATT MCKENZIE**

Results could keep the State an international leader in the industry's artificial intelligence use, according to WA Data Science Innovation Hub director Alex Jenkins.

The "data-brokerage service" is just one plan the hub is considering as it seeks to put WA in a position to gain from the accelerating technology.

Mr Jenkins told The West Australian an industry-wide dataset with information on ore bodies and processing would give the State a strong foundational capability in AI, boosting exploration and sharpening up automated minerals processing.

The plan is in the early stages of advocacy and would involve a brokerage pooling data from third party businesses, using it to train datasets and then distributing generalised results to the companies participating.

The more data is used, the better the results, Mr Jenkins said, as the benefits grow at scale as datasets increase in size. "The sum is more than its parts," he said.

WA has led the world in the use of big data and automation in mining, with driverless dump

trucks, autonomous drill rigs and Rio Tinto's Autohaul Pilbara rail network all examples.

Mr Jenkins said broadening the data used could reinforce that "winning position".

"We could make WA one of the global leaders for AI in mining and automation," he said.

Artificial intelligence would impact every sector of the economy, Mr Jenkins said. "It will be as big as the dawn of the internet, and computing itself."

He cited an estimate by the CSIRO suggesting AI could add \$22 trillion to the global economy by 2030.

There are already major investment dollars flowing, with three new businesses hitting \$1 billion "unicorn" valuations in July, according to aggregator Crunchbase.

A WA example of big data is the under-construction Square Kilometre Array project in the Murchison, which will be part of the world's largest radio telescope.

The SKA's dataset will be so enormous that there are plans to install one of the world's largest supercomputers in the Mid West region to process all the information it collects.

Healthcare and education

could also benefit from the computing advances, Mr Jenkins said — for example, AI could be trained to offer individualised tutoring support for students.

In health care, Perth-based Artrya has used AI to monitor heart health while ResApp — acquired by Pfizer last year — focused on detecting lung issues.

But WA will need bright minds to develop the sector.

"We already need more today, we're going to need thousands more in the future," Mr Jenkins said.

The Curtin University-based hub has previously estimated WA will need about 3000 more data specialists by the end of the decade.