

Telstra opens software skunkworks in Melbourne

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Telstra has opened the doors of its Gurrowa Innovation Lab in Melbourne, a "co-creation space" that the telco compared to Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works of the 1940s and the Homebrew Computing Club.

Australia's biggest telco billed Gurrowa as "an open innovation environment where Telstra, its enterprise customers, partners, incubators, vendors, research institutes" and other members of its innovation network can connect and collaborate on cutting-edge technology.

Gurrowa is based in Telstra's Melbourne HQ in Exhibition St.



Telstra expects to focus on internet of things (IoT) research, providing a "maker space" to design and prototype IoT devices, as well as the network services and software linking them together.

"This year we will connect haptic robots to rural ultrasound equipment, design portable systems that can locate lost children in remote areas, and develop sensor applications to predict when equipment or structures may fail," according to a Telstra statement.

The telco has high ideals for Gurrowa. In a blog post, Telstra CTO Vish Nandlall wrote: " In the 1940s, Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works designed and delivered the XP-80 in 143 days. In the 1970s, the homebrew computing club became ground zero for the Information Age when Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak presented the Apple I. These historic communities all were driven by an ethic of open collaboration and open innovation.

"The technology of the digital age eliminates the remaining friction to openness, allowing Telstra's new Gurrowa Innovation Lab in Melbourne, Australia, to access a global innovation network of universities, disruptive start ups and strategic partners."



Telstra has announced a partnership with software vendor Pivotal, part of the EMC Federation. Telstra has become a member of the Cloud Foundry Foundation and Pivotal's cloud platform will underpin software development at Gurrowa.

"Becoming a member of the Cloud Foundry Foundation will allow us to use cloud native platform capabilities as the engine room for innovation projects in Gurrowa and allows us to reduce our time to market for new products and services," said Telstra chief operations officer Kate McKenzie.

"By partnering with Pivotal, who are global leaders in agile development and cloud native platform, we will enhance our innovation offering for our customers and create a pipeline of skills to grow our development capabilities."