



Success stories

KESTREL MANUFACTURING P/L

Pivoting processes, robotics & the future.



The challenge

In early 2020, as COVID-19 made its presence felt in Australia, Mr Robert Watson was asked to support a Sovereign PPE project that required major investments and changes to his Meltblown process in order to produce a global standard in mask filtration material.

Pivoting the process

Some years ago, the business made significant investments in commercial capacity Meltblown lines, these processes have been used to manufacture absorbent materials for spills of liquids. Interesting to note that these processes are also used globally to manufacture specific filtration materials for surgical face masks. While on the surface simply changing machine

parameters would result in a material that looked like a filtration material, the stringent global standards for the performance of such materials required many changes and investment that included importing state of the art equipment, enclosing the very large process with clean room panels and collaborating with CSIRO, an external test Lab and Med-Con a local manufacturer of surgical face masks based in Shepperton.

Collaboration

During the engagement with the Entrepreneurs' Programme (EP) Robert was introduced to the EP specialist team where he is now working with Paul Perry (Innovation Facilitator) who is facilitating a collaborative Research In business (RIB) project with Swinburne University. This project is addressing a number of challenges that many businesses are faced with. This includes labour and skills shortages while shifting the business towards a factory of the future where highly skilled robotics operators can run processes that improve the competitiveness of the business.

Industry 4.0 (IOT)

With a passion to invest in pivoting current process and introduce new robotics technology, Robert recognises that to explore the full potential of his business, this requires investing in the development of staff, part of which involves training two staff in Industry 4.0 that will enable the business to further evolve to be better positioned for both opportunities and challenges.

"EP is connecting the business with resources that are key to the evolution of the business"

Positioned for the future

While highly engaged with the above Robert is investing in the development of new products that will also benefit from these strategic initiatives.