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# SoftBank Robotics to launch in Australia is 2020

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Softbank Robotics seeks local partners for soon to be launched commercial-grade autonomous vacuum sweeper.

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SoftBank Robotics is seeking local partners for its soon to be launched commercial-grade autonomous vacuum sweeper in Australia.

SoftBank Robotics plans to launch the AI-enabled vacuum-cleaning robot, Whiz, to the local market in early 2020 following a soft launch at the ISSA Cleaning & Hygiene Expo in Melbourne last month.

Whiz was first launched in Japan followed by recent introductions in Singapore and Hong Kong. The company has also set up an office in Sydney, with plans to extend its local team over the coming months.

SoftBank Robotics APAC COO Lee Chin Yau said hotels, commercial office buildings, public spaces such as libraries and airports and the hospitality industry, are the key markets that will be targeted as part of its local roll out

SHORTLIST 0

Whiz is powered by BrainOS® and can record up to 600 cleaning routes, for which staff teach the robot the initial floor cleaning route upon their first use.

Subsequently, routes are stored in Whiz so it can repeat the cleaning route autonomously. Through cloud data visualisation, cleaning and status reports on Whiz can be gathered and analysed.

With its computer vision navigation, Whiz can navigate its way close to walls and avoid obstacles, while the notification pager can send real-time alerts. Whiz can clean areas up to 15,000 sqft, the size of three basketball courts, for three hours on a single-battery charge.

According to Yau the machine is primarily designed for carpet cleaning, with users also able to access floorcare data such as route mapping and cleaning frequency.

“[Whiz] helps understand the behavior of the [building] environment such as the peak times of foot traffic.”

Yau said he believes robotics will impact the workforce of the future as adoption of autonomous machines in the cleaning industry gains more momentum.

“Cleaning is an industry that has been one of the slowest [to adopt robotics] but I think it is catching up quite quickly.

“This won’t be a scenario where robots will replace workers. Even though [Whiz] can operate itself, it will be a partnership between janitors and robotics.

“[The technology] also allows workers to up-skill. They can focus on other tasks, allowing the robots to do the day-to-day jobs.

“It could also create new jobs in the industry, such as robot operators, which could possibly attract more workers to the industry.”

Yau said SoftBank Robotics anticipates launching a series of robots in Australia after it establishes itself in the marketplace with a local partner.

“Whiz will be the first model to launch in Australia but we also have a series of cleaning robotics that are in the development stages.”

This week SoftBank Robotics America (SBRA) and ICE Robotics announced the North American launch of Whiz at the ISSA Show North America in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Whiz has already been deployed in commercial spaces across the US this year in pilots at airports, hotels, offices and campuses.

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APAC COO Lee Chin Yau



SoftBank Robotics present at the ISSA Cleaning & Hygiene Expo

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SHORTLIST 0