



Media Release

28 March 2019

Could you be friends with a robot?

A new exhibition challenging visitors to consider what is human and what is machine opened at Questacon – The National Science and Technology Centre today,

Born or Built? Our Robotic Future examines the similarities and differences between humans and machines, explores our overlapping shared future and questions the choices we will make to get there.

Technology is a constant in every facet of our lives and bodies. Through a range of immersive hands-on experiences, *Born or Built?* gives visitors the opportunity to discover new technologies and our developing relationship with them.

Born or Built? explores just how sophisticated and humanlike robotics and AI have become. Visitors to the exhibition can chat with a robot, or test a robot's ability to understand their emotional state. Encounter a range of robotic faces and see which one makes you feel the most uncomfortable.

"Questacon's purpose is to engage and motivate through inspirational learning experiences. Through exhibitions such as *Born or Built?* we can encourage discussion about technologies of the future and inspire the next generation of scientists, engineers and programmers," said Questacon Exhibition Concepts Manager Anita Beck.

"*Born or Built?* asks questions that society will need to grapple with as new technologies evolve and become more widespread."

Woven throughout the exhibition are thought provoking ethical and philosophical questions raised by these technologies and our interactions with them. Visitors can input their own thoughts on ethical challenges and see data collected from visitors in a real time display. The answers to questions like 'What does it mean to be human?' or 'Is a robot responsible for its actions?' lie at the heart of the exhibition.

"Walking through the exhibition, visitors will be challenged with ambiguous moral scenarios. These are hard questions but we need to try to find answers to them, as we start living side by side with sophisticated technologies. Should we say please and thank you to robot assistants? Is it important for us to be able to know if we are talking to a human or a robot on the phone?" Ms Beck said.

With the assistance of Questacon's Technology Partner, Samsung Electronics Australia, the finale of today's official opening featured six Samsung robotic vacuums racing through an obstacle course with only their programming to guide them. Invited guests and school students from Karabar High School and Cranleigh School rallied support for their favourite robot vacuum, with a prize given to the winning robot team.

Questacon is grateful for the assistance of Exhibition Content Partners, Cochlear Limited, Ottobock, Academy of Interactive Entertainment, University of Canberra, National Health and Medical Research Council and the Australian National University.

Born or Built? is open now until February 2020.

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