

# FUTURE LOOKING BRIGHT AFTER BEST EVER EXPO

**The passion and dedication of our industry has never been clearer, with record breaking numbers turning out to invest in their future at the Australian Auto Aftermarket and Collision Repair Expos**

There is no doubt about it, the 2024 Expos were an enormous success, providing the perfect opportunity to celebrate and showcase our incredible industry and all it has to offer.

Each of the three days broke visitor records, with the best turn out since our previous record attendance in 2011 streaming into the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, to the point we still had people wanting to visit two hours out from closing time on the final day.

To see the enthusiasm for what we had on offer was exceptionally satisfying, especially given we brought a lot of the organisation of the event in-house this year for the first time.

Our theme was The Future Is Here, and this was chosen very intentionally because while we have been talking for a number of years about new vehicle technology coming down the line, that technology and its impact on businesses and service, repair, and modification techniques is now well and truly here.

What we are trying to do, as the national representative association of the industry, is not to push businesses one way or the other on issues and opportunities, but instead provide insights on what is coming and what impact it will have, so members can make informed decisions on how they want to tackle the unprecedented wave of change. Our role is to give members the information and confidence to move forward while market conditions continually change around them.

The challenge we have here is we have such a wide variety of businesses in our industry who will each have a different perspective. So, our approach was to deploy a varied training and education program – including technical training for the first time – and to have it delivered by leading experts from around the country and the world. Based on visitor feedback, this seems to have comprehensively hit the mark.

Our thanks goes out to each and every one of our speakers, experts and trainers who helped us deliver our incredible training program, including (but not limited to), our international visitors Diagnose Dan and Martin Moller, Bill Hanvey, Sean Tipping, Bud Centre, Dirk Fuchs and Robert Snook.

At the AAAA we work hand-in-hand with industry and members to design major events which are truly reflective of industry preferences. To that end, we worked with experts from The Garage Network and The Automotive Technician (TaT) to identify and secure some of these amazing trainers and called on our own strong relationships with industry leaders abroad to complete what was a compelling program. We are grateful to every person involved.

An extension of our commitment to creating a world-class learning environment could also be seen in our new ADAS Technology and Expo Electrified Zones,

two specialist areas born out of consultation with our exhibitor sub-committee.

Many of you will remember at the 2022 Expo we had the Workshop of the Future Zone which delivered shorter 'TED Talk' style presentations. Heading into 2024 we heard loud and clear our audience wanted to get hands-on and by partnering with ADAS Solutions and TaT we were able to offer those opportunities, with each and every session packed out.

It was not just in these zones that attendees showed their interest in the educational topics we had on offer. For the first Thursday seminar, I joined Wayne Bryant from GPC Asia Pacific, Steve Drummy from BAPCOR, and Bill Hanvey from Auto Care Association (USA) to deliver an Industry trends panel in a 420-seat theatre which had people standing in the aisles. The thirst our industry members have for knowledge and desire to stay ahead of the curve was abundantly clear.

Another thing we did differently this year was to increase our use of digital and social media marketing to expand the Expos' audience and attract new visitors to Expo and our exhibitors' stands. Traditionally those that visit are workshop owners and managers, and while continuing to cater for them as our industry leaders, we also wanted to reach out to our next generation – the technicians who will be the owners of the future, our apprentices, and those considering the industry as a career.

For apprentices in particular we were really proud to have a number of initiatives, including the popular Flying Spanners competition, coordinated jointly by Kangan and Box Hill TAFE. A number of our members such as Bosch Car Service, mycar Tyre and Auto and others also brought large groups of apprentices who were able to take part in sessions which helped to keep them educated on how big our industry is and the myriad of career prospects it presents. We are looking forward to doing more of this going forward as the Expo is a wonderful way to showcase our industry at its magnificent best as we tackle the skills shortage.

Something that was also very pleasing was the energy on the floor – the atmosphere was electric and right from the Thursday morning, which historically has been quieter, it was more packed than I have ever seen. It is safe to say the hall was absolutely pumping and the quality of the exhibitors and their activations really helped us to deliver an engaging experience which saw many attendees coming back for multiple days to completely immerse themselves in the experience.

The Expo was a practical demonstration of the energy and optimism there is around our industry, and I am so proud of what we were able to achieve together for our members and our industry as a whole.



Anyone that visited Expo and didn't get an opportunity to complete the post event survey can still have their say by sending an email to [admin@aaaa.com.au](mailto:admin@aaaa.com.au)

## Coming up: Autocare 2025

While we are still buzzing from such an exceptional Expo, we are also hard at work on our next big event: Autocare 2025. Mark your calendars for Friday the 20th and Saturday the 21st of June 2025 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

After a fantastic Autocare in 2023, we are going to be taking the training to a whole new level in 2025, with the best local and international trainers combining to provide a massive array of diagnostic, technical and business training all delivered across longer sessions with topics of interest for your entire team. There will also be a trade show featuring all the major industry brands as well as networking events providing additional value.

Autocare will provide us all with another great opportunity to connect again in Brisbane, and we encourage business owners and managers to bring their team along.

And of course, Expo will be returning to Melbourne in 2026 and I personally cannot wait – it has been so good to see our industry come together and show our best side, and I am very much looking forward to joining with you all again at both Autocare 2025 and Expo 2026.



**Stuart Charity**  
Chief Executive Officer