

TAKING A LOOK AT AUTOCARE

With the dust now settled on the inaugural Autocare Convention which was held at the International Convention Centre in Sydney from the 4th to the 5th of May, we wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on our rationale for launching the event, the major outcomes from the Convention and most importantly, our future plans for this important industry activity

The concept for Autocare had its genesis in a strategic planning session of the AAAA National Council held in February last year. We had a long discussion about the impact that Vehicle Technology and Industry Disruption will have on every company in the aftermarket industry and we also discussed how much of the commentary, or noise, about what is happening was inaccurate and ill informed.

One of the major outcomes from that session was an agreement on the need for the AAAA to play a major role in supporting our members and the wider industry for what may come and cutting through some of that noise to provide authoritative advice about what to expect, when, and how to get ready for it.

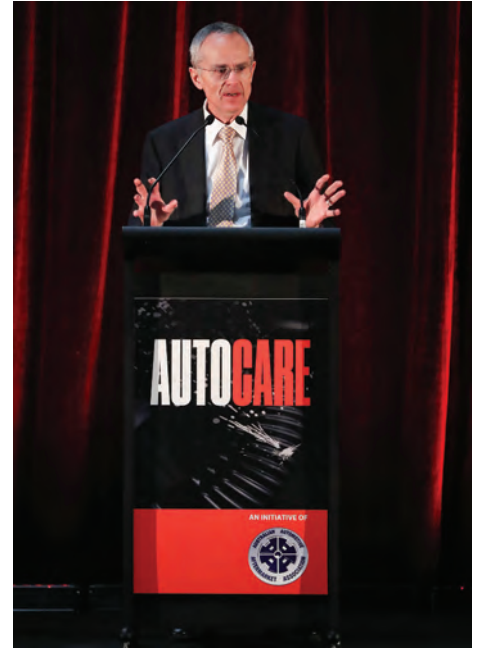
It is for this reason that the inaugural Autocare 2018 Convention tackled the theme **Disruption, Innovation, Rejuvenation** and why we secured experts from across Australia and across the globe to provide the very latest information and practical tips on how the aftermarket industry and individual businesses can tackle these challenges to not only survive, but thrive, by taking advantage of the many opportunities that will arise as our industry changes.

And while we had very high hopes and expectations for the Convention, the response from our industry to this new initiative blew us all away! Autocare 2018 completely sold all major sponsorship categories and trade display space, which is a remarkable achievement for an inaugural event and demonstrates the strength and resilience of our amazing industry. And the 600 Convention delegates and the thousands of visitors that attended the Tradeshow were treated to an

incredible array of information, market intelligence, tips, training and product demonstrations to help them better understand and leverage the significant changes taking place at every level of our industry.

One of the highlights of the Convention program was the opening plenary session which attracted an audience of 550 delegates and featured an opening address by Assistant Minister to the Treasurer, The Hon Michael Sukkar, who announced that the Government was actively working on the design of a mandatory scheme for the sharing of critical repair and service information with consumers and their choice of repairer and assured the audience that achieving this outcome was a priority for him and the Government. He was followed by ACCC Chairman Rod Sims who outlined the intense focus that the peak competition regulator has on competition issues in our sector and what they intend to do to ensure that the independent aftermarket can have confidence in a future in which consumers are able to exercise choice of repairer and parts, a future in which fair and open competition is monitored and enforced.

On Saturday morning the father of Right to Repair in the USA, Aaron Lowe, joined AAAA Government Relations Manager Lesley Yates to provide attendees with a comprehensive update of the global efforts on access to repair and service information and received a standing ovation from the appreciative crowd. Our other international speakers, Scott Brown from the Diagnostic Network and Jason Bartanen from ICAR, presented the very latest global developments in the mechanical and collision repair sectors to packed rooms.



We would like to extend our congratulations to all Convention and trade display sponsors on putting together such a wonderful showcase of our great industry and in particular acknowledge all of our sponsors and partners, led by our Platinum sponsor Repco and our Diamond sponsor ICAR. We simply couldn't have done this event without all of your support.

While not everything at Autocare went exactly to plan, and in particular the attendance from collision repair workshop owners and technicians was lower than we had hoped for, we plan to undertake extensive consultation with our Convention stakeholders, visitors and sponsors and use this to do some fine-tuning on the format, so we can further build on the wonderful platform we have created.

In closing we would like to acknowledge and thank the team at International Exhibitions and Conferences for bringing our wonderful Convention together, our fantastic MC/Media Manager Paul Marinelli and the sensational team at the AAAA, and in particular our event manager Michelle Vizzutti. They have done our industry proud once again. Last but not least, we would like to thank everyone that supported Autocare, as a speaker, sponsor, delegate and visitor, we genuinely hope that you found the event to be of value. We will now get to work to ensure that Autocare returns bigger and better in 2020.



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