

# HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME TO 2022

**I hope everyone was able to spend quality time with family and friends to rest and recover from the ups and downs that 2021 presented**

Once again, we have endured a shaky start to the year thanks to Omicron, which has presented a range of challenges for all businesses.

However, there is now some light at the end of the tunnel and here at the AAAA we are determined not to let the pandemic railroad our plans this year.

Our focus is firmly on the future, and we have an ambitious agenda for the coming year.

The largest industry event for the year will be the Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo, co-located with the Collision Repair Expo.

It is hard to believe the Expo is now less than two months away, taking place from 7 – 9 April at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. The show is the nation's only comprehensive exhibition for Australia's \$25b aftermarket industry and will bring together the industry's best and brightest and showcase over 250 of the country's leading brands.

The theme is 'The Workshop of the Future is Here' and is designed to educate and prepare you as an attendee for this future, so you can not only survive, but thrive in an era of unprecedented technological disruption.

Given the current situation we understand that some may have concerns about the event taking place, but we are very confident about running a successful Expo in April. With visitor registration numbers tracking above that of our 2019 show at the same time, I firmly believe this demonstrates not only the confidence the industry has in attending, but just how excited everyone is to get together, re-connect with industry colleagues and do business in person.

The free Expo seminar sessions will be incredibly beneficial for attendees. We've gathered a fantastic group of leading industry experts who

will share insights into the topics that matter to you. You will be able to learn about the most common legal issues affecting workshops, how to use data to improve business performance, using business fundamentals and customer service to boost success, and gain insights into the future of vehicle modification.

In addition to the above topics, three other Expo seminar topics represent the AAAA's top strategic priorities for this year and beyond and will outline vital information on these key industry challenges.

The first session will focus on the number one issue affecting workshop sustainability and growth – the skills shortage. A panel of industry leaders will tackle the challenges we face, and with optimism, share ideas on how we can attract staff and address skills shortages at the workshop level. We are not underestimating the challenge of this issue, and the very real impacts on our members, but the AAAA is well placed to lead the fight once again on behalf of the industry to make meaningful change.

Another seminar session, hosted by Lesley Yates, will brief attendees on the all-important Motor Vehicle Service and Repair Information Sharing Scheme as it enters the final stages before its implementation on the 1st of July. Building an entire system to support and operationalise the law is certainly a challenging proposition. However, we are well positioned to have everything in place come July and we are working diligently to that end. This seminar will provide an overview of what information will be made available under the scheme and how technicians will gain access to it.

The other hot topic for our industry continues to be EVs, so I'm excited to lead an expert industry panel discussion on this topic to get down to the facts. EVs in high volumes are coming. But how soon? And what are the challenges we need to be aware of so we can be ready and take advantage of this new automotive era.

Limited tickets are available for each seminar, so to confirm your place, please register for the Expo and select your seminars of interest at [www.aftermarketexpo.com.au](http://www.aftermarketexpo.com.au). Registration for the Expo and seminars is free of charge.

Speaking more generally about the year ahead, I know our team is looking forward to getting back to seeing our members and hosting member networking events and other industry activities. Personal relationships are so important, and I'm sure you will agree with me, zoom meetings just don't get close to replicating face to face events.

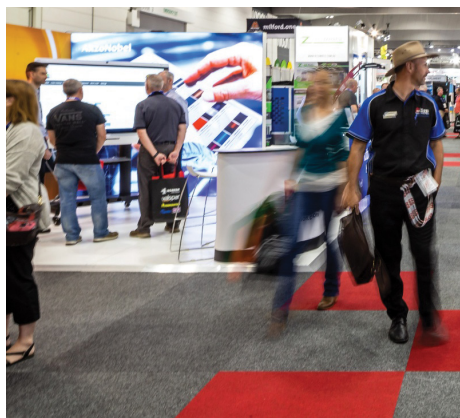


Stay tuned to our communication channels as we kick start these popular member events.

Finally, the Auto Innovation Centre (AIC) is now entering its third year. The client list continues to grow as the demand for innovative services to support companies grows. We are very happy the industry has embraced the unique mix of technology and services the AIC offers for product development and encourage you to visit [www.autoic.com.au](http://www.autoic.com.au) to learn more and see how the AIC may be able to assist your business.

This year is certainly shaping up as one of our biggest ever, and with the support of the AAAA Board, the AAAA team, and the two-way communication with our members about their needs and issues, we have every reason to think we will achieve a great deal.

Onwards and upwards.



**Stuart Charity**  
Chief Executive Officer