

READY FOR THE FUTURE AND EMBRACING THE NOW

There is a great deal of focus at present on the transition to Zero and Low Emission Vehicles (ZLEV) – in fact, this subject is currently dominating discussion across the industry

While the AAAA fully backs this important technological evolution and will support the aftermarket industry throughout the journey, we must make sure we don't lose focus on ICE vehicles which for the foreseeable future will remain the daily bread and butter for our workshops and technicians.

I've heard from many AAAA members over the last few weeks, particularly off the back of our media release confirming we will be consulted as part of the government's strategy for the EV transition, and this was a hot topic of discussion at our recent Automotive Repairers Council Australia (ARCA) meeting.

There are three key messages I've heard loud and clear. Firstly, you understand the ZLEV future is coming, and want support with advice, education and training to allay concerns and prepare your customers. Secondly, and equally as important, is that the AAAA should maintain its focus and effort on supporting the service and repair of ICE vehicles, and thirdly, that the government should factor ICE vehicles into the overall national transition strategy.

Our industry is increasingly becoming EV ready, but we must not lose sight of the projected timelines involved. The government has previously set a target of 50 percent of new car sales being ZLEV by 2030. Even if this 50 percent figure is reached, the volume of ICE vehicles currently on our roads and the 10-year average age of the car-parc, means ICE vehicles will remain the predominate vehicles in our car-parc for many years to come. That is why we are advocating for a balanced and realistic transition, and our government consultation will remain a priority moving forward.

We welcomed the Federal Government's announcement to consult with the aftermarket on the establishment of a national electric vehicle strategy because the aftermarket industry, which comprises more than 50,000 businesses and 300,000 workers, has a huge role to play in the role out of this strategy, and we need to get it right. Independent workshops and technicians will be at the forefront of servicing and repairing ZLEVs. Consultation will ensure our businesses are heard, informed and ready to capitalise on this industry evolution. Lesley Yates (our Director of Advocacy and Government Relations) and I recently appeared at a Senate Enquiry in Canberra on this very topic. We are proactively engaged on behalf of the industry.

Electric vehicles will undoubtedly be central to this new strategy, however hydrogen powered, hybrid and sustainably fuelled efficient internal combustion vehicles should also be considered part of the solution.

It is important to remember that the new Motor Vehicle Information Scheme (MVIS) will future proof your ability to obtain the manufacturer information you need to service and repair your customers' ZLEVs. With an increased reliance on technology and software these cars require, the MVIS, via the AASRA portal will further prove itself to be an invaluable workshop tool. It really has changed the game for workshops.

With the environment a key factor driving the national ZLEV strategy, independent workshops will have a very important role to play in reducing emissions and maximising efficiency for our existing ICE powered vehicles. Access to manufacturer information via the AASRA portal further supports our ability to make a positive impact by reducing emissions, increasing fuel efficiency and maintaining the health of these vehicles for years to come.

Education is going to be absolutely crucial to a successful, well-supported transition. With our critical skills shortage, providing new training pathways will need support on all fronts. Workshop technicians and owners must have access to ZLEV training courses, while consumers must feel confident that you can service and repair their ZLEV vehicles safely and professionally, just as they trust you currently to service their ICE vehicles. As more customers consider purchasing ZLEV vehicles, you need to be armed with the information and materials to provide sound advice to support their decision making.

Encouragingly, our industry has already shown its willingness to embrace the future with long waiting lists for technicians wanting to complete the basic EV safety training courses across the country. We are working with governments, training organisations and other industry bodies on expanding training opportunities to meet this demand.

It is natural that change can create apprehension, but with a good plan, the correct advice, ongoing open communication and the right training, change can also bring growth and new business opportunities to the aftermarket industry. I look forward to supporting our members and the industry through this change.



I welcome your thoughts on the ZLEV transition and how we can best serve and protect your business through this exciting time for the industry, so I invite you to please email info@aaaa.com.au and use the subject: ZLEV Transition.

AASRA Resourcing

Interest and application numbers to join the AASRA portal for the MVIS remain extremely high. We have deployed additional resources to reduce response times and increase speed of application approvals. The portal continues to be improved, and we appreciate your understanding and feedback during this initial rollout phase of what is an unprecedented scheme. To learn more about AASRA and register, visit <https://aaasra.com.au>

Autocare 2023

Our Autocare speaker program is shaping up and I'm excited to soon be in a position to share the industry leading talent lined up to impart wisdom and practical advice to prepare you for future success. Whether you are a technician or workshop owner, Autocare 2023 is not to be missed. Registrations will also open soon so keep an eye on our communication channels.

If you are wanting to exhibit or become a sponsor, please contact autocare@aaaa.com.au and to keep up to date on everything Autocare, visit www.autocare.org.au



Stuart Charity
Chief Executive Officer