

NEW EV AND MIGRATION STRATEGIES IMPACTING THE AFTERMARKET

We are only days away from Autocare, with final preparations being made for what will be the largest automotive training event to ever take place in Australia across the 9th and 10th of June at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre

We are very proud of the comprehensive training programs we have created for technicians and workshop owners on the topics that matter, and the incredible collection of industry experts we have assembled to deliver each session. From improving businesses sustainability, efficiency and profitability, to the latest EV service, repair and advanced diagnosis training, this is an event you can't afford to miss.

I am also excited to see thousands of attendees take advantage of the FREE to industry Autocare Trade Show. The Trade Show will feature 100 of Australia's best brands showcasing the latest tools, technology and services and is a valuable addition to the Autocare education programs.

Register to attend the free trade show at www.autocare.org.au/tradeshow. Reminder: trade show registration will not provide access to the paid Autocare Training Programs.

We are also delivering a brand-new initiative with the National Light Vehicle Modifications Summit. This event will give vehicle modifiers a unique and rare opportunity to discuss current and future vehicle regulations. I know most of the big players have already locked in their attendance. **Last minute tickets are still available for the Modifications Summit at www.autocare.org.au/modsummit**

We can't wait to deliver Autocare for our industry. It will be a truly ground-breaking event, and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

We have recently had two major announcements from the Federal Government that will directly impact our industry, and tie in nicely to the training we are delivering at Autocare.

The first is the release of the National EV Strategy, which is designed as a pathway for Australia's transition to electric powered vehicles, and to a cleaner environment.



While we welcome the strategy, as the Automotive service and repair industry will be a vital component of ensuring the EV Strategy succeeds, we would like to see more detail on how the Government plans to support the increased demand for EV service, repair, maintenance and training. Ensuring the availability of cost-effective spare parts, skills, and equipment to support the maintenance and efficient running of EVs is critical to the systems and infrastructure required to enable rapidly increasing EV uptake.

While there is an inclusion of funding to support New Energy Apprenticeships, with demand for EV courses and trainers outstripping supply, we need more trainers and flexible training options for our existing 360,000 automotive professionals, and particularly for the automotive light vehicle technicians located in rural and regional Australia.

We look forward to the opportunity to be involved in planning for a clear National EV Training Roadmap to support this transition with the Federal Government, because right now, the EV upskilling effort is a highly fragmented and confusing landscape.

I believe the transition to zero and low emission passenger cars can provide major benefits for the community, and we must work collaboratively to develop the systems, infrastructure and training needed to support this transition.

The second announcement was the new Migration Strategy. This Strategy will prioritise skilled workers in industries facing long-term labor shortages, including the automotive service and repair sector. AAAA supports the Government's initiatives to drive innovation in the economy and create jobs for the future through simplified pathways for specialised, highly skilled workers.

Although migration is not a magic fix for skills shortages, changes to the migration system will greatly benefit many businesses.

The Strategy addresses several concerns that the aftermarket industry has raised for years including complexity and cost, as the sector wrestles with a shortage of over 30,000 skilled workers.

I've heard from many of our members who have considered sponsoring overseas workers to fill vital skilled roles, however a complex process, combined with exorbitant fees for visas and accreditation courses costing some mechanical workshops over \$20,000 per worker, have been a significant deterrent. These costs are something that AAAA believes the Federal Government



should look to lower as part of its Migration Strategy.

Workforce restrictions for businesses have knock on effects on the cost and availability of repairs and maintenance for Australian car owners. We will work with government to build on this initial outline to ensure businesses have a transparent system that places productivity as the key priority. Skilled migration could play a pivotal role in helping build much needed capacity in the automotive service and repair sector in Australia. We look forward to engaging with the government on how we can best achieve shared goals for the industry and leverage the new migration policy to help address the skills shortage in our sector.

The skills shortage is the number one concern for our industry, and we will continue to do everything we can to address this issue at all levels of government.

If you would like to support our work and are not already a AAAA member, membership is a great way to help us protect and promote our industry. To learn more and join, head to www.aaaa.com.au See you at Autocare!



Stuart Charity
Chief Executive Officer