

# FUTURE-FOCUSED AND PROUD OF IT

From the Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo to industry programs and groundbreaking research, we are working hard to help members prepare for what's coming

As we move into the final quarter of 2023, it has been another exceptionally busy time for the AAAA and the aftermarket as a whole.

We have been proud to officially launch the Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo (AAAE) and the co-located Collision Repair Expo (CRE), with registrations opening soon for what is the nation's only comprehensive exhibition for Australia's \$25B aftermarket industry.

Across the new dates of April 11-13, which allow us to avoid the Melbourne Grand Prix, the Expos will bring together the industry's best and brightest while showcasing hundreds of the country's leading companies, all under one roof.

Across the coming months you will see some very exciting announcements about what to expect at the Expo, which will be held under the very timely theme of 'The Future is Here,' so be sure to keep an eye out and register for what is sure to be an unmissable three days in Melbourne.

Our Expo theme aside, you no doubt have been hearing a lot of talk about the concept of 'The Future is Here' thanks to the rapidly changing face of the automotive landscape both here and abroad.

At the AAAA we are working around the clock to ensure our members are ahead of the curve when it comes to the future of our industry, our car parc, and the needs of our workshops and their customers.

Just one example of this is when recently, together with the Auto Innovation Centre, we were pleased to launch an exciting new EV initiative for the aftermarket thanks to a partnership with the Victorian Government via the ZEV Commercial Sector Innovation Fund.

As you would have read in a recent edition of this magazine, the AIC has taken delivery of two exciting new EVs – a Polestar 2, and what is currently Australia's only commercially available Ford F-150 Lightning.

The AIC will be undertaking a range of tests and modifications on the vehicles to understand the suitability for various markets and usages and access will also be provided to individual companies for their product development purposes.

These new vehicles are forming the foundation of a dedicated joint AAAA and AIC campaign to support the aftermarket through the coming EV transition with training and product development opportunities, and to help promote the uptake of EVs in Victorian fleets.

This program is already gaining lots of attention in the industry and from political partners, and we were pleased to host The Honourable Melissa Horne MP for a tour of the cutting-edge AIC and our new EVs to showcase how the industry is already benefiting from our ZLEV grant in the weeks following the program launch.

In all of this, knowledge is critical, not only when it comes to working on EVs, but in knowing what is happening in the market, and what is likely to come next.

For this reason, research is a key benefit that we are proud to deliver to our members, hand in hand with our research partners, Fifth Quadrant (formerly ACA Research).

A number of key research projects have been released recently, and one which you can read more about within the pages of this magazine, is the launch of the AAAA's Australia-First Future Readiness Index.

I was proud to see this groundbreaking research reveal that fifty percent of our industry's workshops are either already EV ready or investing heavily in future readiness, and that many of these workshops have been successfully and safely servicing and repairing EV and hybrid vehicles for some time. On top of that, a further 39 percent are not 'EV rejectors,' but simply waiting until



the investment required lines up with their local market demand.

While the findings of the Future Readiness Index, which we have been sharing at member nights around the country in recent weeks, gives us the data we need to advocate for our industry with those who may seek to make decisions for us, other research projects delivered by the AAAA and Fifth Quadrant aim to arm our members with key data to make the decisions they need for themselves.

In addition to the recently released Workshop Employment and Technician Survey research, which included key salary benchmarking information you would have read about in last month's magazine, our industry leading and regularly updated Consumer Insights and Car Parc Data form part of a rich catalogue of member-exclusive research which provides all the information members need to make informed and strategic decisions for the future of their businesses.

The future well and truly is here, and from our Expo to advocacy to breakthrough research and more, the AAAA looks forward to continuing to deliver for our members to ensure they have the knowledge and the tools they need to best prepare and position themselves for success.



Stuart Charity  
Chief Executive Officer