

TAKING ACTION TO GET RESULTS FOR OUR INDUSTRY

At the AAAA we have always backed up our words with action

As the National peak body for the entire aftermarket, we have a huge responsibility and unwavering commitment to protecting and promoting the industry, as we have done for over 40 years.

We are uniquely positioned to identify threats, consult with members, and respond strategically through our advocacy efforts, to ensure the sustainability and success of our industry.

A powerful example of taking action is our recent trip to Canberra with a delegation of AAAA members. A group of directly affected member businesses joined us as we campaigned for change to the Federal vehicle modification approval system which is currently handicapping our proud Australian automotive manufacturing industry.

Despite the AAAA actively flagging concerns to government before the current legislation was introduced in 2021, and being given assurances that an approval pathway for Second Stage Manufacturers (SSM) would be developed, this important inclusion was omitted from the Scheme.

The current approval process for essential and routine commercial modifications prior to first registration is an extremely difficult, time-consuming process which is strangling the ability of Australian automotive manufacturers to innovate and compete in a fair manner.

Some companies have already withdrawn from the SSM market due to frustrations with the approval process. Unless the system is fixed, we risk killing off what Australian engineering, design and manufacturing we have left, which will hamper Australia's ability to evolve and meet changing automotive trends and a future low emission industry.

The current system is also having a knock-on effect to other sectors, from farmers to our mining industry, state and territory emergency service vehicles, and consumers who are looking to implement safety upgrades to carry or tow greater weight or to deal with Australia's harsh terrain.

With the issue steadily getting worse, it was clear

we needed to take a bold step to strengthen our position, help policy makers understand the burden the current system is imposing on Australian companies, and request immediate change.

Working with our affected members, we quickly lined up a group of representatives who were excited to form a delegation and accompany us to Canberra.

Under the lead of Lesley Yates, our Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, we arranged a range of meetings with key decisions makers to provide an opportunity for our members to use real world examples of the impact of the current process on their businesses and their customers.

I'm proud to say the delegation was a resounding success. We had very positive meetings with senior executives from the Department of Industry Infrastructure and Transport, Senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, and Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Tony Pasin MP as well as the Assistant Minister for Transport and Infrastructure's Chief of Staff and the Shadow Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, The Honourable Senator Bridget McKenzie.

A number of commitments were made in those meetings, with all parties very clear that change is crucial for the future of the automotive manufacturing sector and the many essential sectors that rely on our industry.

I also want to thank our member representatives who were all fantastic in providing their time and expertise to support the campaign. We will maintain our pressure for change on this crucial issue.

Our action doesn't stop there. We always have and always will represent and defend our industry when its under threat.

Auto Aftermarket Expo and Collision Repair Expo

I can't wrap up this column without reminding you of the biggest and most valuable industry event of the year, the Auto Aftermarket and Collision Repair Expo, which will be held in less than two months.

You can't afford to miss this epic showcase of equipment, tools, technology and training, all under the one roof in Melbourne from 11 – 13 April. And, entry to the Expo is FREE for anyone working in the automotive industry!

We've pulled out all stops this year when it comes to training, and the Expo will be the only place to learn from a magnificent line-up of international and local trainers. We've got Diagnose Dan and Sean Tipping, two of the world's foremost diagnostics experts, conducting an exclusive training program for technicians wanting to fast-track their diagnostics capability.

We are also excited to host Dirk Fuchs, who is a highly sought after global leader on EV and Hybrid



technology and EV workshop setup, as well as Robert Snook, a highly respected international business coach who will focus on how businesses can find and retain great staff and increase their revenue streams.

Bill Hanvey, Chief Executive Officer and President of the US Auto Care Association will headline our Business Education training program. Bill will be joined by many of Australia's leading industry figures to help businesses prepare for future success across a range of important topics.

The Expo Electrified and ADAS Technology Zones are two exciting new education and training features available to visitors, designed to satisfy industry demand for more information, tips and insights about these emerging areas of automotive technology, service, and repair.

All the training sessions, free and paid, as well as Trade Show entry, require registration. So, go to www.autoaftermarketexpo.com.au or www.collisionrepair.com.au to secure your spot – and bring your team, to increase the learning and inspiration across your entire business!

In addition to the world-class training, the combined Expos will see 400 incredible brands showcasing their latest technology, products, parts and services, while unique networking opportunities, competitions, and interactive displays will create an unmissable three-day industry celebration.



Stuart Charity
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