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## 2015 *Collision Repair Expo* shifts industry into top gear

**At the 2015 *Collision Repair Expo*, which was held in Melbourne from 16 to 18 April, Australia's crash repair suppliers, manufacturers and exporters demonstrated that this sector of the Australian automotive industry is healthy and working with state of the art technologies.**

Hosted biennially by the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA), the *Collision Repair Expo* and the co-located *Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo* showcased 420 exhibitors from 21 countries across more than five acres of floor space. In addition, 30 other organisations staged their own events to link with what is now the largest automotive industry show in the Oceania region.

The Expos, which are trade only events, attracted 10,266 technicians and workshop owners and managers. AAAA Executive Director Stuart Charity said this attendance is up 34% on the 2013 Expos held in Sydney.

"Exhibitors are delighted with this result, particularly in the knowledge that the collision repair workshop segment of the Australian automotive industry is consolidating," he said.

"This is testimony to the passion and commitment workshop owners and managers have for their businesses. They know they have to stay on top of trends to be successful in a small business.

"Expo visitors were keen to learn how to improve their businesses. They attended to experience the huge range of leading edge technologies available – the products, tools and equipment on display. Much of it is Australian made.

"They also came to attend the comprehensive seminar program covering both technology and business operations topics. The two-day program offered 14 seminars and attracted 2,200 delegates.

"Another benefit enjoyed by Expo visitors is the fantastic networking opportunities offered. These ranged from a simple happy hour to get people together to share ideas, to a range of meetings and conferences hosted by collision repair sector organisations.

"And this whole Expo experience was free for our trade visitors. We sincerely thank the dedicated industry executives who work on the Expo organising committees. They have set a very high benchmark for the 2017 Expos, which will again be held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from Thursday 30 March to Saturday 1 April 2017," said Stuart Charity.

### **Expanded Lowbake demonstration spray booth**

A popular point about the *Collision Repair Expo* is that it makes it easy for workshop operators to get the latest information about surface coating technology and consumables with virtually all of the key suppliers exhibiting their products under the one roof.

This year, visitors also enjoyed a larger and more flexible live surface coating demonstration experience thanks to investment by Lowbake Australia. There were two separate demonstration booths at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre, including a large new booth built on a 13.7 metre long drop deck trailer.

Lowbake Australia Managing Director Mark Williams said the new demonstration unit is more spacious for visitors and more convenient for the surface coating suppliers that use the facility to demonstrate their products at Expo.

"This unit features an integrated fold out spray booth 1.2 metres longer than the existing unit. It also has an internal mix room at the end of the booth with a generator and compressor mounted at the front. The indoor viewing room for visitors is attached to the unit," said Mark Williams.

"Inside are some world first technologies, including an IR gas arch that rotates to do the front and rear of cars as well as the sides. Other world firsts are the mobile IR gas unit, mobile UV Cure lamp and mobile IR electric paint curing lamp --- all made in Australia.

Located adjacent to the trailer based unit was a second spray booth. Used at the 2013 Expo in Sydney, this unit has its own indoor viewing room and uses a single IR GAS arm, UV curing equipment and RADS for water based paints," said Mark Williams.

Both Lowbake demonstration spray booths were fully booked by surface coating, equipment and consumable suppliers, including Major Corporate Sponsor AkzoNobel Vehicle Refinishes, Axalta Coating Systems, DNA Custom Paints, Lowbake Australia, Nippon Paint, PPG Industries Australia, Protec, 3M Body Protection Systems, and Valspa Automotive.

In 2007, the Australian *Collision Repair Expo* was the first show in the world to feature a demonstration spray booth when Lowbake Australia launched its initial portable unit.

**Photo caption RibbonCutting.jpg:** *Opening the Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo on 16 April were (left to right) Federal Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Industry Senator Kim Carr, Senator Ricky Muir, AAAA President Bob Pattison, Senator Nick Xenophon and AAAA Executive Director Stuart Charity.*

**Photo caption LowbakePaintLo.jpg:** *The new custom made Lowbake Australia portable demonstration spray booth based on a 13.7 metre long trailer provided a comfortable venue for visitors to learn about the latest surface coating techniques and products.*

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**Photo caption CREActionHi.jpg:** *Exhibitors at the Collision Repair Expo offered visitors plenty of "how to" action to introduce the latest technologies.*

**Photo caption CREWeldHi.jpg:** *Product demonstrations creating a real workshop atmosphere were a feature of many exhibitors' stands at the Collision Repair Expo.*

#### **About the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association Limited (AAAA):**

The AAAA is the national industry association representing manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, importers and retailers of automotive parts and accessories, tools and equipment in Australia. The Association has over 1,800 member companies in all categories of the Australian automotive aftermarket and includes major national and multi-national corporations as well as a large number of independent small and medium size businesses. Member companies are located in metropolitan, regional and rural Australia. The parts and maintenance sector of the \$108 billion Australian automotive industry represents about \$34 billion. AAAA member companies employ more than 30,000 people and export over \$800 million worth of product a year. Visit <http://www.aaaa.com.au/>

#### **Further information:**

Barry Oosthuizen  
AAAA Communication Advisor  
M: 0413 185 135  
E: [b.oosthuizen@bigpond.com](mailto:b.oosthuizen@bigpond.com)