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World class stands and seminars reward Expo visitors

The high quality of exhibitors' stands and the business improvement focus of the seminar program attracted almost 11,000 industry visitors to the *Collision Repair Expo* and the co-located *Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo* held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from 6 to 8 April 2017.

Presented biennially by the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA), the Expos offered visitors the chance to experience thousands of products and services demonstrated on 437 stands, learn new ways to make their businesses perform better during the two day seminar program, and provided unprecedented networking opportunities for sharing ideas with industry colleagues.

AAAA Executive Director Stuart Charity praised the performance of the exhibitors for presenting a show of international standard as well as the engagement of the visitors for embracing the "build a better auto business" show theme.

"There are about 25,000 workshops in the auto aftermarket across Australia. To attract visitors from around a third of these businesses to the Expos in Melbourne is a fantastic result," he said.

"While around 26% of the visitors registered specifically to attend the *Collision Repair Expo* to explore its 70 stands, most people take advantage of the opportunity to see both shows.

"The atmosphere throughout the exhibition halls was tremendous. A lot of business was done and even more business leads were generated. Given the challenges faced by the automotive industry, the Expos highlighted the positive vibe charging through the aftermarket.

"Confidence in the industry is returning and that was reflected in the increase in the number of attractive custom designed stands. Although our Expos are not as large as the American SEMA and international Automechanika shows, this year Expo exhibitors lifted the bar making our event more than comparable in terms of their investment in stunning looking stands," said Stuart Charity.

I-Car contributes to Seminar Program success

One amazing Expo statistic relates to the seminars. The themes and topics for the Seminar Program attracted 2,500 delegates. "We partnered with I-Car to create this Seminar Program and the standard of presentations and discussion was exemplary. We thank all those that contributed to this important learning and sharing experience," said Stuart Charity.

"The Expo has become an important industry meeting place and major contributions to networking at the event were the opportunities created by so many industry organisations choosing to co-locate their activities at the show.

"Altogether, there were more than fifty conferences, meetings, workshops and launches held over four days filling every 'nook and cranny' of the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

"New Zealanders made up 70% of the international visitors and we thank the Collision Repair Association of New Zealand for again holding their annual Conference in tandem with Expo," said Stuart Charity.

Lowbake Demonstration Spray Booth pulls crowds

A huge bonus for *Collision Repair Expo* visitors is the opportunity to see live demonstrations of virtually every type of surface coating product. The Exhibitors also relish the chance to show off their latest technology in front of a keen audience.

Stuart Charity said this attraction is unique to this Expo. "There is nothing else like it at any trade show in the region," he said.

"The *Lowbake Demonstration Spray Booth* program was fully booked by exhibitors. And workshop owners and managers responded by filling most sessions and engaging in the interactive demonstrations. We congratulate Lowbake on their massive commitment to make this valuable contribution happen at Expo.

"A new initiative for 2017 was the *Brian Tanti Working Workshop*. Renowned coach builder and Fox Museum Curator Brian Tanti held visitors attention during displays of techniques ranging from 100 year old panel shaping skills to today's 3D printing technology," said Stuart Charity.

Aftermarket buzzing with optimism

At the official opening of the Expos, the first response from Federal Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Senator Arthur Sinodinos, on entering the exhibition hall was "wow, wow, and wow" as he looked in each direction.

Stuart Charity said the Expo provided a great opportunity to showcase the scale and scope of the sector to Minister Sinodinos. "The exhibitors' displays impressed Senator Sinodinos and gave him a different and more comprehensive perspective of the sector," said Stuart Charity.

"The overwhelming mood of *Collision Repair Expo* exhibitors was very positive. They were pleased with the enthusiasm of visitors and many said it was the best Expo yet," said Stuart Charity.

Autocare 2018 Convention and 2019 location for the Expos

At Expo the AAAA also announced a new major education and information exchange event for the aftermarket parts, service and repair sector.

Titled the *Autocare 2018*, this new convention will address the theme *Disruption, Innovation, Rejuvenation*. World class Australian and international speakers will cover the topics that matter to the future of all businesses and professionals in the automotive industry.

Stuart Charity said this event will be held at the new state of the art International Convention Centre in Darling Harbour, Sydney on 4 and 5 May 2018.

"With thousands of automotive professionals attending this convention, it will provide industry suppliers with an unrivalled business development opportunity in this large and important market," he said.

"We hope to build on the synergies we enjoy at the Expo with the collision repair sector and will welcome their participation in the convention.

"The plan is to hold the *Autocare 2018 Convention* in Sydney in 2018 and the hugely successful *Collision Repair Expo* and *Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo* at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from Thursday 4 April to Saturday 6 April 2019.

"With this duo of major national events, the AAAA continues to provide leadership for the aftermarket sector with business development focused initiatives," said Stuart Charity.

Photo caption CRERibbon.jpg: *Cutting the ribbon at the official opening of Expo was Federal Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Senator Arthur Sinodinos. Joining him were (left to right) Dayco Australia Managing Director and Chair of the AAAA Australian Automotive Products Manufacturers & Exporter Council, Arnold Mouw; AAAA Executive Director Stuart Charity, Victorian Shadow Minister for Investment & Jobs Craig Ondarchie; and Fulcrum Suspensions Chief Executive Officer and AAAA President Graham Scudamore-Smith.*

Photo caption CREStands: *Consistent crowds of enthusiastic visitors at the Expo created a buzz during three busy days for exhibitors.*

Photo caption Lowbake.jpg: *The fully booked Lowbake Demonstration spray booth gave Expo visitors a close look at the latest surface coating technologies.*

Photo caption CREPainter.jpg: *A comprehensive range of body finishing materials, crash repair equipment and tools was on display at the Collision Repair Expo.*

Photo caption BrianTantiWW: *Renowned coach builder and Fox Museum Curator Brian Tanti held visitors attention during displays of techniques ranging from 100 year old panel shaping skills to today's 3D printing technology.*

About the Australian Collision Repair Expo:

Hosted every two years by the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA), the next Expo is being held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from Thursday 6 April to Saturday 8 April, 2017. It will be the nation's most comprehensive exhibition of body finishing materials, crash repair equipment and tools. This is a trade only show run by the industry for the industry. An Expo highlight is the education and information program featuring industry experts to update businesses on the latest technologies and new trends in workshop management. More than 400 top Australian and international brands will be displayed across five acres at the *Collision Repair Expo* and the adjacent *Auto Aftermarket Expo*.
<http://www.collisionrepair.com.au/>

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, and providers of mechanical repair and modification services in Australia. The Association represents 2,250 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 \$11 billion. AAAA member companies employ more than 40,000 people and export over \$1 billion worth of product a year. Visit
<http://www.aaaa.com.au/>

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