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Newsletter of the Vehicle Air conditioning Specialists of Australia
1995 National Conference - Special Edition - September 1995

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VASA 1995 - the Blueprint for Growth



VASA members from around Australia have voted the 1995 conference at St Kilda, Melbourne a huge success. President Mark Mitchell says the conference will be a milestone to the future, marking the turning point from being a fledgling organisation to one with considerable power and clout in the automotive air conditioning industry. This pic was taken after the tour of the Australian Automotive Air plant at Croydon.

Flammables and HFC134a Dominate Agenda

The national conference took votes on major issues after sometimes "warm" debate on the question of replacement refrigerant gasses and their dangers.

Here are the other major conference decisions and recommendations to committees.

1 Training Program to begin in Queensland in September 1995. First course will be advanced skills, retrofitting. The course was devised by the VASA technical committee and Grantley Hand.

2 Increased public relations effort to improve the consumer and industry profile of VASA.

3 Call for generic service access fittings. There was a strong feeling that during the positioning of 134a in the market place, generic service fittings are a requirement when installing 134a. Should other suitable refrigerants become available for retrofitting, they should also have their own generic service fittings. The Technical Committee was asked to investigate.

4 VASA applauded a closer alliance with NRMA. This alliance hopes to clarify the service procedures and costings for retrofitting at the smash repair stage.

5 Conference to be held in Sydney 1996 on dates to be notified.

6 Recommendation that VASA technical committee investigate the mandatory recovery of 134a in Australia, rather than having 134a being declared a controlled substance.

The Ban

VASA has moved to ban the use of environmentally friendly, but highly flammable refrigerant gasses in Australia's vehicles.

Members are concerned that with Australia phasing out ozone-destroying CFC's, some refrigerant substitutes may be kind to the environment, but dangerous to consumers.

Association President Mark Mitchell says the risk of car explosions and personal injury is too high a price to pay for refrigerants which may be efficient, but which contain substances such as butane and propane.

"Vehicle air conditioning systems are just not made to handle flammable refrigerants," said Mr Mitchell.

VASA, which represents more than 80% of the manufacturers, suppliers and technicians of the Australian automotive air conditioning industry has voted to follow the lead of the Environmental Protection Agency in America, which banned all flammable refrigerants during retrofits in the U.S. car industry from mid-July this year.

"We are also guided by the United Nations Environmental Program which declared flammable refrigerants to be too dangerous for existing CFC systems", said Mr Mitchell.

"Worldwide concern has followed the attempted introduction of hydrocarbon refrigerants into the car air conditioning retrofit market," said Mr Mitchell.

"Car manufacturers and air conditioning compressor manufacturers worldwide have adopted one replacement refrigerant, R134a for both new and retrofit systems, and Australia will follow this lead.

"There is a real danger to air conditioning industry workers as well as consumers if unskilled people are let loose with refrigerants they don't understand," said Mr Mitchell.

AAA's Growth Plans Announced for VASA

Australia's biggest manufacturer of automotive air conditioning systems, Australian Automotive Air at Croydon, Victoria will greatly increase its manufacturing capacity during 1995.

The announcement by Deputy Managing Director and CEO Kel Tsuchiya coincided with the first inspection tour of the AAA facility by the Vehicle Air Conditioning Specialists Association of Australia.

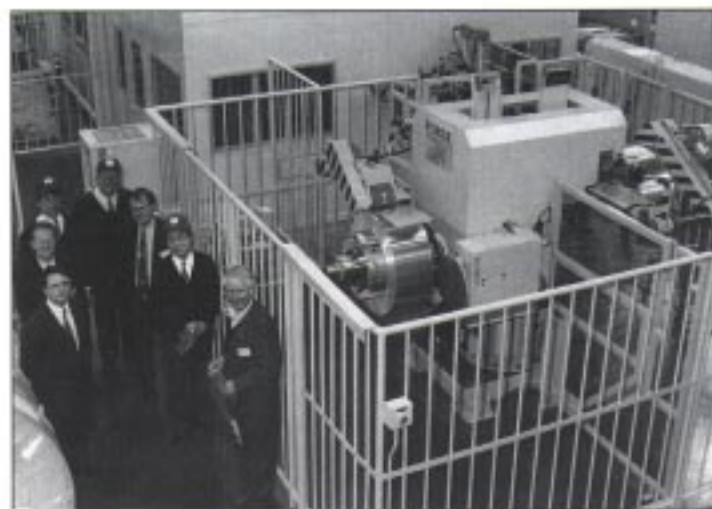
It was a history-making meeting between AAA executives and Australian leaders from the wholesaling, retailing and technical sectors of the automotive air conditioning industry. More than one hundred members of VASA from around Australia were given a special tour of the plant and a briefing on AAA's future plans in the industry.

The tour highlight was the new \$10million 500 tonne stamping press - the only one of its kind in Australia.

Mr Tsuchiya said the press would give the Croydon plant the capability of producing locally, segments for the new generation single tank evaporator for automotive systems.

"With upgrades to our brazing furnaces, AAA will lift its manufacturing capacity from 300,000 to 400,000 automotive air conditioning systems per year. This additional capacity will enhance AAA's ability to export heat exchanger products to South East Asia.

"To support this enlarged market segment, AAA is also actively working towards both greater localisation of component production and global sourcing to complement the increased business which we hope will be stimulated by this significant investment" said Mr Tsuchiya.



Standing next to AAA's newly installed \$10million press are (from left):- John Donazon (Assistance Manager - Service Department); Mark Mitchell (VASA President); Mark Nagai (Senior Manager, Quality Assurance); Russell Pettis (General Manager - Production); John Blanchard (VASA Vice-President); Kel Tsuchiya (Deputy Managing Director and CEO, Australian Automotive Air); and Ralph Cadman (VASA Secretary/Treasurer).

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President looks to the future

The future of VASA depends totally on how we present ourselves to our respective publics. This is why we have made our internal and external public relations a top priority. VASA is useless unless it can make itself heard at every level from Government down. The ultimate promotion target for VASA to aim for is the motoring public.

Our other goal will be to commence our

national training agenda. I have felt a great sense of pride to hear from so many VASA businesses and individual motorists of how well our service centres have worked this year. This in itself is a major achievement for VASA.

My advice to VASA members, whether wholesalers, manufacturers or dealers is to stick to your knitting, treat retrofitting as

part of your overall business and behave like air conditioning specialists, not retrofitting specialists. This way we will continue to show the motor industry at large and the motoring public, that we are a special group of people with special skills.

We must never lose sight of our heritage.

Mark Mitchell
President

Trade Show has Great Future

The 1995 trade show, run in conjunction with national conference, was a sure-fire winner and will undoubtedly be magnified and repeated next year in Sydney.

Due to space limitations at St Kilda's Novatel conference rooms, several significant companies were told "too late" when they tried to book space for 1995.

They will no doubt be first in next year, judging by the success of this year.

The stands were well presented and most reported brisk inquiry and interest - if not direct sales.

The trade show was thrown open at the end of the full day of conference and after a quick re-shuffle, they were also featured at the dinner on the same night. The exhibitors have reported they got their money's worth.

Here's a final slap on the back to the 1995 exhibitors:-

- Unicla Australia Pty Ltd
- TRX Automotive Products
- Trans-Cool Airconditioning
- Dayco Pacific Pty Ltd
- Robinair
- Cooltemp Pty Ltd
- Davies Craig Pty Ltd
- Sanden International (Australia) Pty Ltd
- Javac Pty Ltd
- Melbourne Auto-Air
- Eaton Controls
- Four Seasons Air Parts
- Talarico Engineering
- Refrigeration and Heating SA
- J & N Bish Auto Air
- Cabin Comfort

For those who wish to get in early with stands or suggestions for the Sydney convention in 1996, talk to one of these conference committee reps.

Tony Heat of Carter Sewell Automotive
Phone: 02 949 5188
Fax: 02 949 5461

Les Howard of Howard Auto Service Pty Ltd
Phone: 02 477 2422
Fax: 02 482 2738

Jeff Green of Jeff Green Mobile Car Air
Phone: 02 522 6111
Fax: 02 544 7750

John Blanchard of Melbourne Auto Air
Phone: 03 9890 7333
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Mark Mitchell with Graham Bailey (SPX-Robinair)



John Blanchard (Melbourne Auto Air) with Glen Watkinson (Car Aire)



Mark Mitchell with Alan Ould (TRX Automotive Products)



History making AAA plant tours were a highlight



John Blanchard (Melbourne Auto Air) presents to John Donazzon (Australian Automotive Air).



Mark Mitchell (left) with Greg Thomas (Auto Frost) and Ralph Cadman (Unicla).



AAA plant tours proved very popular.



A scene at the tradeshow.

Guest speakers cover refrigerants, flushing oils, technology and education.....



David Bryant
Elf Atochem

Elf Atochem will close down its R12 plant at the end of November this year and Elf Atochem will NOT be manufacturing any R11, nor will it be importing R12 or R502.

From 1st January 1996, HCFC's will enter into the ultimate phase out program. The total phase out is to occur by 2030, but I anticipate that the dangerous refrigerants will be substantially reduced by 2020.

Main contender for replacement refrigerant is R134a and anything with a CFC in it will be controlled.

Why 134A? - it is a single substance, with no preferential losses and no separation in the system.

It is very similar to R12 and is seen as the only option because it is not flammable, not toxic and matches well. It is the only substance capable of meeting the requirements.

The logistics.....there are 5 million cars in Australia and an estimated 3 million have air conditioning systems. This represents about 3000 tonnes of R12 on wheels.

Why focus on a single substitute? The systems are similar and many people are qualified to service vehicles. But poor labelling will lead to problems, especially if you have an array of substitutes.

For these reasons, I am delighted to hear that you are approaching one substitute.

When you mix refrigerants you get problems, which make costs.

Destruction of gas provides a discipline. Make sure systems are labelled if "funny things" are used.



Steve Sakamoto
Chief Engineer Sanden Europe (by courtesy of Sanden International (Australia) Pty Ltd

The Sanden variable seven-piston compressor (SD7V16) was introduced due to customer demand. This demand reflects the typical European driving environment which is high speed for long periods. In addition, there was a need to reduce clutch cycling or clutch torque shock and to improve fuel consumption.

European car manufacturers view personal vehicles as a relatively high tech, high value product.

Therefore, higher tech cost features and components, such as 4 valves per cylinder, variable compressors etc, may be used to contribute to the overall vehicle image and quality.

The fixed displacement compressor is therefore not preferred.

The Scroll compressor, although superior in performance and with minimum NVH levels (noise, vibration and harshness), either in fixed or controlled development configuration, does not have the range of controlled displacement of the SD7V16 at this time.

The SD7V16 will have a range of 6-100% displacement controllability. Seven pistons with 161cc are suitable for medium to large cars.

The Sanden variable meets all current requirements and future series will meet new European standards and specifications.

Although variable compressors are now predominantly a European requirement, they most certainly will be ideal for Australia's future generation of cars.



Don Michau
Bright Solutions Inc USA

The Ford company is the only manufacturer that has approved a flushing solvent.

The flushing agent was developed by Ford along with Bright Solutions and it is now being supplied to Ford Dealers in the USA as Ford A/C System Flushing Solvent.

Clear Flush is a non-CFC flushing solvent that is compatible with both R 12 and R134a air conditioning systems.

At last there is a flush for 134a systems which is compatible with PAG oils and suitable for flushing R12 systems prior to retrofitting.

The BSL-338 Clear Flush is tested, proven, environmentally sound, safe and easy to use.

Ford states that the ability to remove flushing agents is very important for proper air conditioning system operation because one to two ounces of remaining flush can adversely affect PAG viscosity, refrigerant capacity and could also cross contaminate the system.

Ford has said that after testing the other available flushing oils and solvents besides their own, one to two ounces of the available flushing agents could not be removed from the system, even after purging and evaporating with shop air for 30 minutes or more.

In the case of the lightweight oils, one to two ounces of flushing oil remaining in the system can cause a degradation in the viscosity of the air conditioning systems PAG lubricant by 25% or more.



Grantley Hand
VASA Training Coordinator

The training program for VASA members and their technicians has been structured and is ready to go.

It is an advanced skills training course and the first is going to be held in Queensland.

The importance of training has been brought home by the fact that next summer may well be a retrofit summer, so training before summer would appear to be a good idea.

This is a new era in automotive air conditioning, with the introduction of the industry to a new generation of refrigerants into existing R12 systems.

There are no drop-in replacements for R12. We have to make a decision on which drop-in refrigerants suits the application best.

Any decision made for the customer is controlled by three things...

1 We have to do it at a cost - if not we will get the job back to repair after someone else has had a go at it.

2 There are technical advancements.

3 A lot of later systems are designed for high heat load, low speed conditions.

System evaluation will be critical in order to maintain performance and reliability within financial constraints.

The VASA training committee will be bringing down a training calendar.

They came from Kiwiland

The 1995 national conference drew delegates from New Zealand, fuelling discussion at executive level about VASA in future becoming a significant Australasian or Pacific force - not just an Australian body. President Mitchell welcomed the New Zealand contingent during the conference. They were Auckland Auto Air Ltd, represented by director Barry Rogers and Stuart Montford and NZ Auto Air Distributors, from Auckland, represented by director and marketing manager Richard Cooper and director and technical manager Quim Silva.