

H t Air



Newsletter of the Vehicle Air-conditioning Specialists of Australia
Post-Convention and September Edition - 1996

National Secretariat: VASA (ACN 063 969 782) PO Box 6222 Silverwater NSW 2128

Work n' play 96 will be hard act to follow

It was hard to find any gripes about the content and outcomes from the Sydney VASA convention, held at the Landmark Hotel in Pott's Point from August 9 to 11.

Anyone who went home without learning something to improve their business outlook must have slept through it.

With international speakers, purposeful entertainers and a packed trade exhibition, the show was a great tribute to the organising skills of Tony Heat and his willing team of Les Howard, Ralph Cadman, Jeff Green and Mark Padwick.

As for the annual dinner - entertainer Scott Williams literally laid them in the aisles. He proved to be a highly motivated and entertaining young man who gave considerably more than he was contracted to do.

Still, there must always be the odd grumble or two. There has been some comment about the entry charge for the trade exhibition only.

A comparison with other trade conventions in Sydney around the same time shows conclusively that VASA gave top value for money.

For those few people who felt stung by the entry fee, VASA points out that charges were specially structured to be "very affordable", thanks to the generosity of the sponsors. VASA is confident that members and guests received excellent value for their dollars - especially when taking the training sessions into account.



PIC: Steve Whitelock of Queensland may look smug now, but as incoming convention chairman for 1997, he will no doubt pick Tony Heat's brains before launching into organising mode. Tony actually scrubbed up pretty well at the convention dinner - the beer was genuine, but we admit to pulling his tie askew to give him that well worn look for this photo.

"You must maintain a stream that is pure."



The Presidents confer. Mark Mitchell (left) and Simon Oulouhojian from USA had plenty to talk about.

That was the single most important piece of advice from a person who understands the refrigerant gas debate around the world better than anyone - VASA's special guest at its annual convention in Sydney, Simon Oulouhojian, President of MACS (Mobile Air Conditioning Society Worldwide - of USA).

See Story on Page 2

Simon says - continued from front page

Simon painted a vivid and sometimes frightening picture of the battle of refrigerant gasses.

He warned that although the world's major car manufacturers had stipulated a change over to R134a, there were commercial forces at work around the world peddling a variety of blends and replacements, some of which were contaminating the refrigerant stream.

"The problem is we don't know if we are going to survive the plague.

"Next to heroin, R12 smuggling is the next biggest illegal import in the US. The Customs people are gradually sealing off illegal refrigerant coming into the country because a lot of the stuff is not pure R12 and is full of contaminants, posing great danger to air conditioning technicians and the motoring public," Simon added.

"It is a tremendous challenge. We have enormous system contamination - we don't really know how much."

He tipped that the supply of pure R12 would begin to disappear by the end of 1997. The replacement refrigerant of choice was R134a, which was already universal to all new vehicles.

Simon spelt out these benefits of adopting R134a:-

Availability

Cost

Recovery and recycled on site

Approved by all manufacturers for retrofit

Compatible with PAG and Ester lubricants

Not compatible with mineral oil

No blended refrigerant has been approved by vehicle and aftermarket parts component manufacturers

The concerns about hydrocarbon gasses in the US are:-

Health and safety

Effects on system operations

Refrigerant control devices

Has it been tested to SAE

J1657 specifications

System fitting and labels

Recovery equipment

Simon said parts manufacturers had stated their warranties would be voided if used with any refrigerants other than R12 or 134a. It posed the question "What is the auto air conditioning workshop's liability."

He warned that VASA must urgently assemble a data base of information so that it can effectively take up issues concerning the industry with government leaders.

Simon warned VASA that it needed to be pro-active in issues concerning fridgerants and auto industry standards.

"In everything we do, there is opposition. The people who set the prices are often not sensitive to the issues or the dangers of contaminated refrigerants.

"You must develop a data base - if you don't no-one listens. When you have to go before government, if you don't have data to support your views, you have nothing to say.

"The data developed by MACS is "snapped up". It has highlighted a lot of unsavoury practices in the industry. For example, we were carrying a lot of inventory we didn't need because our research is now able to give us accurate data on which failures occur in which product lines," said Simon.



Simon Oulouhojian (centre) with Tony Heat (left) and Mark Padwick

With the affiliation of VASA and MACS now imminent, Simon has granted permission to Hot Air to reproduce relevant issues from its respected industry newsletter and circulars.

Many of these will be reproduced in Hot Air over a period of time.

Prepare for change warns VASA chief

VASA's re-elected president Mark Mitchell has urged members to be prepared for change in the way they conduct their business, to meet tough economic times and the changing demands of the customer.

"The 1996 financial year has triggered a change in business attitudes within most of us," Mark told the Sydney convention.

"In the past, business planning and target setting has been a matter of setting our sights on financial and sizing goals which reflect what we hope our business will be.

"These days, we have had to shorten our foresight. Now I think it's time to budget our business on what it is - what we can clearly see and what we know to be realistic. We cannot budget any more on what we hope will be.

(Continued next column)

Prepare for change

- continued from previous page

"For me, this has meant discontinuing the pursuit of some old ideas and procedures and forced me to pursue new opportunities. Thankfully, there are plenty of these," added Mark.

"The customer now demands that we maintain our technical brilliance, give exceptional service and do all that for a fair price.

"I am determined to stimulate a flow of ideas and concepts from VASA to share with our member businesses and help them wherever possible to succeed in this volatile and rapidly changing market.

"As your president, I must do whatever I can to guide and encourage VASA to train its members and the staff of members.

"I must encourage and promote to members the real value in raising of standards and I must encourage VASA to represent and promote these standards," said Mark.

"On the subject of training, VASA is privileged to have such outstanding talent within the training and technical committees and special mention must be made of the services of our education coordinator, Grantley Hand.

By training our technicians, we lift the standards.

By lifting the standards we lift the price.

The better prices, the better and healthier the business.

*VASA Members - share
HOT AIR with staff,
associates and visitors.
Leave copies in your
customer waiting room.*

THANK GOD FOR THE SALVOS

In an unbelievable display of goodwill towards those less fortunate than themselves, VASA delegates coughed up a princely \$9000 for the Salvation Army's work in the notorious King's Cross district of Sydney.



The money was raised in an extraordinary hour or so towards the end of the annual dinner function, during an auction of donated items.

The brainchild of South Australian VASA stalwart and director Glen Watkinson, the auction turned into a comedy routine with Glen as "straight-man" and the entertainer Scott Williams extracting money with razor sharp wit and slapstick pace.

Salvation Army officer for King's Cross, Paul Moulds, sat in the front row and kept shaking his head. He couldn't believe he was walking out of the hall with nine grand in his pocket to spend on the needy work of trying to keep kids out of the gutters. His impassioned plea on behalf of the street kids must have struck a special chord in the generous souls of the VASA members and their guests.

The executive have decided to adopt a charity at every convention from now on and try to repeat the performance - although the Sydney show will be a hard act to follow.



Glen Watkinson as auctioneer found it hard to keep a straight face



Scott Williams trying to get top dollar for some sort of gauge thingamy.

**If VASA members wish to tap in directly to MACS in the USA, here's the address:-
<http://www.macsw.org>
Their email address is macs1@macsw.org**

This is a special edition of Hot Air to accommodate the many important issues covered at VASA's national convention. There were other significant outcomes of the convention, and a mass of technical information vital to members was distributed. In future issues, Hot Air will publish these technical papers.

CFC Smuggling - Convention claim



The smuggling of CFCs is already creeping into Australia, Clive Erskine of AFCAM told the VASA convention.

And as for stocks of R12 - he believes next summer may determine how long stocks last. Currently, there is no clear estimate on how much stock is held.

However he believes Australia will run out sooner than most of the developed countries, so it seems the crunch will come some time next summer.

On the question of blends, Clive said it made little sense to use them in servicing car air conditioning systems.

"If you put a blend into a vehicle, every kg of it will have to be destroyed when it is removed. So in the long run, blends are not a smart move," said Clive.

He estimates that about 80% of the available R12 which is sold will go into the automotive sector.



Refrigerant Reclaim Australia was put under the spotlight at the recent VASA convention in Sydney.



Executive Director of AFCAM, Steve Anderson who is assisting the board of Refrigerant Reclaim and board member Clive Erskine of AFCAM responded well to calls from VASA President Mark Mitchell to divulge the real picture of recycled gas stocks in Australia and how the funds were being used.

First, what is Refrigerant Reclaim Australia?

It is an industry sponsored initiative to reclaim, reprocess or store and safely destroy all ozone-depleting refrigerants. In the vehicle air conditioning industry, these refrigerants include R12 and most blends.

In all Australian states, the law places responsibilities on service personnel such as the vehicle air conditioning specialists, so that where ever possible those personnel must recover and recycle ozone depleting refrigerants. Where refrigerant is too contaminated for reuse, it must be safely destroyed. Substantial penalties can be applied where these responsibilities are not met.

The motor vehicle air conditioning industry successfully recycles a great deal of R12 and was one of the first industries in Australia to adopt recovery and recycling.

For some time it has been illegal to vent CFCs to the atmosphere, where this could be avoided. This will shortly apply to HCFCs as well and is already the case in some states. This means that contractors could have legal and practical difficulties getting rid of contaminated CFCs and HCFCs.

Refrigerant Reclaim Australia guarantees that both contaminated and reusable refrigerants will be taken back by refrigerant wholesalers who will pay a bounty to contractors for the material.

The wholesalers, to whom you return your reclaimed gasses, will issue suppliers with a credit equivalent to 50 cents per kilogram for contaminated refrigerant and \$2.50 per kilogram for reusable refrigerant.

As stocks of R12 decline, there is likely to be more and more contaminated material circulating in the industry. The problems posed by increasing levels of contamination are likely to lead to increased equipment failures, unless there is a way to reprocess this gas to acceptable standards and unless the reprocessor is prepared to give a warranty on the product.

RRA reprocesses all refrigerant to the industry standard for new refrigerant ARI 700. Prior to formation of RRA there was no legal way to dispose of gas which is so contaminated it can only be destroyed. RRA takes back contaminated refrigerant for destruction and takes over the legal responsibility. So far it has saved the industry over \$1.2 million in destruction costs.





Some other statistics on Refrigerant Australia:-

- ◆ 143 tonnes of refrigerants have been recovered
- ◆ 65 tonnes have been reprocessed
- ◆ The first batch of reprocessed material is about to be released to the market
- ◆ The current cost of reprocessing is \$15 per kg
- ◆ The current cost of destruction including transport is \$30 per kg
- ◆ The total running costs for RRA are \$350,000 per year or 4.5% of annual revenue
- ◆ Virgin CFCs will be unavailable by the end of 1996
- ◆ To date approximately 4% is being returned for reprocessing
- ◆ 90% of returned refrigerant can be reprocessed, but 10% needs destruction

This year's estimates (in kilograms) for reclaimed gasses from the total Australian market are:-

Market	Total	Commercial	Auto
CFCs	1200	300	900
HCFCs	2800	2800	0
HFCs	900	300	600

Ignore training at your peril - warns Everett

VASA members ignore structured training courses for auto air conditioning technicians of the future at their peril, according to past chairman of the Training Committee Mike Everett.

In his annual verbal report to national Convention, Mike declared there was still much more to be done.

"What are we as members of VASA doing to improve the qual-



Training Chairman for the past year, Mike Everett (second from left), discusses his pet subject with co-delegates Alan Morris (left) Selwyn Harley and Kevin Mathews (right).

ity of the auto air conditioning technician?" he asked. "On more than one occasion during the past year, VASA trainer Grantley Hand lamented - it's very difficult to teach air conditioning technicians about complex electronic systems, when they fail to grasp basic auto electrics."

"Who's fault is that? Make no mistake, as employers it is your responsibility.

Bring Pressure on States

"As an employer association we need to set in motion a developing process. We must have a trade apprenticeship for the automotive air conditioning technician. We need to bring pressure on each state.

"In South Australia a set of competency standards has been compiled for a level three tradesman in auto air conditioning. These have been accepted by the ITBN in South Australia. From these standards, training modules can be correlated into a curriculum for apprenticeship training.

"It's as simple as that....all it requires is a determined and balanced approach to your state automotive industry training boards. Let's use the influence of our association to force a change... we ignore it as our peril," warned Mike.

Call for Response to Training Questionnaire

The training courses held at VASA's Sydney convention were greeted with unexpectedly high numbers, given the large number of options available.

Sunday morning numbers were down as expected (the morning after the banquet) and special thanks are due to those who did brave the hangovers.

The response to the questionnaire was encouraging, especially from those people who attended training and now realise the level of training the Association (VASA) provides.

For people/members who did not attend the conference, we have duplicated the questionnaire on a freepost/fax-back format included in this edition.

It must be stressed that numbers are limited (to provide QUALITY training) and time is very limited. The ideal training period is now through to early/mid November so an early response to this questionnaire is vital. For further information on courses please do not hesitate to contact Grantley Hand on (08) 8251 3894, or FAX (08) 8289 4260.

A response is only an EXPRESSION OF INTEREST and you will be contacted in the near future to formalise dates, validate participation etc.

Australian Showcase of Auto Air conditioning goods and services - Sydney, August 1996



CPS Products/Wigan - Brett Spicer



TRX Automotive Products - Alan Ould



Corporate Air Conditioning- Sean Martin, Brian Armstrong



Ingram- Shane Quaille, Graeme McLachlan



Gates, Tony Castellino



Ezy-Fit - Paul Robinson



(LEFT) Air International Transit - Paul Findlater, Andrew Milroy



Johnson Products - Geoff Johnson



◆ Lovelock Luke - Neil Mathews



Melbourne Auto Air - Robert Picone, David Ellis, Emiel Warmerdam
Glo Leak Car Parts - Geoff Bestwick, John Mcilwaine
 ◆

(BELOW) VACC Insurance - Mark Durance



Below - The Kit King - Jim Russell (Pioneer award recipient)



Nanbri Frozen Air - Brian Wilkinson, Laurent Plano, Keith Murray



*Nippon Air Parts - Craig Pattison,
Justin O'Sughrue*



Sanden - Mark Padwick



*Auto Aire -
Kevin Mathews*



*J & N Bish - John Bish,
Jeff Bassan*

*Unicla Auto Air -
Gerald van der Hout*





*Cooltemp - Steve Whitelock,
Bevan Carrick*

Jayvac - Eric Dobbie



Cabin Comfort - Mike Everett



Davies Craig - Robert Thompson



BOC Gases - Bob Scanlon

**TO ORDER PICS OF
DISPLAY BOOTHS**

Colour prints of all of the display booths at the 1996 VASA Convention can be purchased from Hot Air:-

Per standard 4X6" print = \$1each

5 X 7" print = \$4.50 each

Send \$4.00 to cover handling and post with every order to "Hot Air" - PO Box 2204, Southport BC Qld 4215

.....and the winner is.....

Convention committeeman Les Howard (right) presented Javac's John Kurley with the award for having the best stand at the VASA trade exhibition.



PIONEER HONOURED

Jim Russell - the Kit King - founder of A.K.T.F. Pty Ltd was honoured as Australia's first auto air conditioning industry pioneer at the VASA annual dinner in Sydney.



VASA president Mark Mitchell announced the executive's decision and presented the award.

"We need to understand how our industry has evolved," said Mark.

Until 1970, Jim Russell was a fitter, working in the Sydney port area, during which time he became interested in tooling and engineering design work especially on vessels.

That was the year he applied for and started a job with

Mounts and Pulleys, known to the industry as MAPCO. He learned about the auto air conditioning industry from the manager of MAPCO, Preston Hazzard an American with enormous experience and a minimum of tact.

Jim worked at MAPCO until 1978, when he recognised the need for mount kits which fitted easily and compared favourably with Japanese mounts, which only suited Japanese engines. So Jim and Carol set up their business at Kirrawee in 1978, which is still known as AKTF and commenced manufacturing Mount and Drive kits for Australian vehicles.

The range quickly expanded as did AKTF's reputation. Jim, always supported by his wife Carol, has been actively involved in the automotive air conditioning industry with his business since the early days and has contributed much to its growth.

Many things have changed in the industry over the past twenty six

years, people have come and gone and Jim Russell's skills have benefited many of us over this period and deservedly has earned the inaugural VASA Pioneer Award.



Keynote speaker at the VASA convention, Iven Frangi, used comedy and audience interaction to get some hard hitting marketing messages across.

The best way to report on Iven's performance is to give you a list of Frangi-isms. For the anecdotes leading up to these punch lines — well... you just had to be there.

- A marketing plan has a suction effect - it just pulls things along behind it.
- Businesses are no longer attracting customers the way they used to.
- People look for something different when they arrive at your door.
- You can't be in business today, using yesterday's methods and expect to be ahead tomorrow.

DEALERS TARGETED

Public Relations initiatives will be stepped up with special focus on motor dealers.

It's expected a major document will be prepared to "sell" VASA to the motor dealers of Australia. It's an area of concern to VASA members, because many dealers are still driven by price rather than quality of the repairs or installations.

Another kit which will be compiled in the next year will be aimed at the VASA members. The objective is to supply members with generic PR materials which will enable them to promote VASA in their own business and consumer communities.

At the national level, President Mark Mitchell has vowed to expand the readership of Hot Air where it matters most and to step up the flow of correspondence on vital issues.

.....Frangi-isms

- The problem with many business managers today - lot's of action, not much traction.
- Work on your business - not in your business. - You work in the business to make it grow - you work on your business to make it go.
- Implement good systems. If you have a problem, turn it into a system and the system becomes the answer to your problems.
- Have a database and get your name in front of your client four to six times a year.
- Survey your customers - ask them "What did we do well.....and what would you like us to do better next time.
- It costs up to six times more to get a new customer than to look after your existing customers.
- Invest in your existing customers through value added service.

Trainers in Action

Jeff Berry of
General
Motors



Grantley
Hand -
VASA's chief
trainer

Insurers want to do the right thing - but repairers and assessors need educating

VASA's national executive has embarked on a mission to close the communication gap between the insurance company policy chiefs and their insurance assessors.

The VASA board held a highly successful conference with the big players of Australian insurance on the eve of the National Convention in Sydney.

However, while the declarations of support for VASA philosophies was loud and clear from the insurance chiefs, the VASA members are not holding their breath that the same level of support will be forthcoming from the other end of the chain - the insurance assessors.

Reporting to Convention, President Mark Mitchell said the 11 insurers represented had expressed a desire to work with VASA to adopt VASA's service standards.

He said that if VASA could achieve this, the question of price would take care of itself.

From the floor of Convention, many members gave instances where assessors - many of them with only scant knowledge of air conditioning repair methods - opted for cheaper and low quality repair alternatives. They were driven only by the desire to keep repair costs paid by their insurer-masters pegged to a low-cost level.

Despite the odds, Mark Mitchell believes the meeting with the insurers was a major milestone

in an otherwise non-existent relationship.

"We know we have to plug the gap between the insurance policy makers and the assessors and car repairers. If that's what we have to do, by education or other means, we'll do it," said Mark. He told convention the insurers were looking to VASA for a sense of direction, because they had been fed a lot of mis-information over the years.

The insurers have called for a detailed proposal from VASA and this is being prepared under the direction of Mark Padwick, Technical Committee chairman and due for submission by the end of September.

Among the points raised by delegates, and which will be covered in the submission were:-

- ✳️ Recycled devices in repairs are a NO NO.
- ✳️ Insurers will agree to a specific time allocation for each repair task.
- ✳️ Insurers will not approve of the use of flammables in air conditioning repairs
- ✳️ An awareness campaign for loss assessors and panel shop managers will be an initiative
- ✳️ An acceptance of workshop procedures by all insurance companies needs to be in writing so that VASA members can wave it front of assessors and repairers

Insurance companies represented at the meeting were:-

Bill Blackall (NRMA), Noel Peterson (GIO), Ian Rogers and Darren Perryman (AAMI), Mike Emerton (CIC), Ben Veldhuis (FAI), Alan Gribble (Suncorp) and Tom Turner (NZI). Two companies did not attend - VACC and MMI.

FOR SALE

CONDENSERS: Triple pass, steel tube, 'O' ring fittings, 305 X 520 mm. suit LH. tractors and headers and easily adapted to most applications. \$75.00 each.

LIQUID HOSES: 4.1 mt X 5/16" Parker Parflex Barrier hose, crimped 'O' ring fittings each end, suit many applications. \$22.50 each.

For all, call Ian Roberts at Hopetown Fabrication & Welding. (050) 833 275.

Seek and Ye Shall Find the Answers to Technical Questions

VASA members need to bring forward their technical questions so that the Technical Committee can be a responsive and effective assistance to the total membership.

This was the call at national convention from Committee Chair Mark Padwick.

He said that while VASA was asserting itself at a national level on Standard Australia committees and MTA's Code of Practice, it needed more feedback from individual members.

"We are here to help you - and in so doing, we can respond for the total membership and perhaps help many more members solve recurring technical questions or problems," said Mark.

Contacts are published in every issue of Hot Air. All members need to do is fax or phone their state committee chairman or direct to Mark Padwick.

A special questionnaire form concerning VASA's on-going training program is included with this edition. Please ensure you fill it in and return it promptly.



Mark Padwick (left) at Convention, with Kevin Mathews and John Blanchard.

VASA READY REFERENCE DIRECTORY

NEW FOR 1996/97

Directors, Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Committees

Directors	Phone	Fax
Mark Mitchell (President)	07 5532 8133	07 5532 8602
Glen Watkinson (Vice Pres)	08 347 1155	08 268 8048
John Blanchard (Secy/Treas)	03 9890 7333	03 9890 0061
Kevin Matthews	09 275 3344	09 275 5630
Tony Heat	02 9949 5188	02 9949 4243

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Mark Mitchell	07 5532 8133	07 5532 8602
Chris Lindeman	02 484 3949	02 484 8608

TECHNICAL

Mark Padwick	02 9791 0999	02 9791 9029
Grantley Hand	08 8251 3894	08 82894260
		Mobile 018266132

TRAINING

John Bish	02 482 1511	02 477 7360
Grantley Hand	08 8251 3894	08 82894260

CONFERENCE 1997

Steve Whitelock	07 3375 5566	07 3375 1404
Mark Mitchell	07 5532 8133	07 5532 8602

QUEENSLAND COMMITTEE

Bevan Carrick	07 3375 5566	07 3375 1404
David Chenoweth	07 33693033	07 33699169

NEW SOUTH WALES COMMITTEE

Jeff Green	02 9522 6111	02 95227138
Tony Heat	02 9949 5188	02 9949 4243

VICTORIA COMMITTEE COMMITTEE

John Blanchard	03 9890 7333	03 9890 0061
Mark Lynch	03 9532 0785	03 9532 1010

SOUTH AUSTRALIA COMMITTEE

Glen Watkinson	08 8347 1155	08 8268 8048
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WESTERN AUSTRALIA COMMITTEE

Kevin Matthews	09 275 3344	09 275 5630
Paul Robinson	09 279 3336	09 279 3156

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