

Hot Air



Newsletter of the Vehicle Air-conditioning Specialists of Australia
September (Post Convention) Edition - 1997

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

Convention Ultimatum- Keep Up or Disappear

The message from Hot Hot Hot! 97 was loud and clear – if you want to succeed in business, get off your butts.

Running a business has never been easy, but in the auto air conditioning industry, changes in technology is forcing dramatic change.

Put simply - those who keep up and ensure that their technicians keep up, will survive. Technical excellence alone won't be enough, however. There has to be a commitment to customer service and a new professionalism has to become the cornerstone of the industry.

President Mark Mitchell told the convention, "We believe we have a very democratic organisation. Our state and national committee structures are set up in such a way that everyone in the industry has instant access to the knowledge of the organisation.

"We'd like to see more members using these state committees to raise issues, ask questions and put forward new and fresh ideas. Don't just leave it to the committeemen.

INDUSTRY IS CHANGING

"By way of summary, I think the single biggest issue which has come out of this convention has been that the time has come to squarely address the fact that the industry is



President Mark Mitchell delivers the timely message

changing – indeed it could be under threat if we allow it.

"The need for training of ourselves and our employees has emerged as the biggest single imperative of the next few years," said Mark.

"If we don't take notice, we will disappear. Fortunately, enough of us think positively enough to make a difference. We must continue to persuade our fellow workshops that change is inevitable. We must continue to fight to show the consumer why they should only deal with VASA members and why it is that we feel so strongly about a mono-refrigerant society.

"Most importantly, many of us in this industry have the knowledge, but are we putting the knowledge to good use?" asked Mark.

VASA's chief trainer Grant Hand didn't mince words.

He told the conventioners he had never listened to so much doom and gloom.

"If you want to die, go away and do it. If you want to be successful, start learning and educating your staff."

Breakthrough:

The South Australia Cabinet has approved a submission from the Minister for Industrial Affairs to introduce controls over the use of flammable hydrocarbon refrigerants in automotive air conditioning systems. VASA applauds the move and will continue to work on other States until it achieves a uniform approach across the nation. *More on Page 4.*

VASA is proudly affiliated with:-



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Mark Padwick
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NSW Committee
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Grantley Hand
Training/
Chairman
Technical
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NEW FACES

The VASA Convention on the Gold Coast was highly acclaimed from many points of view, not the least being that it brought forth a number of new faces in the various committees which ensure the organisation is well represented nationally.

A detailed break up of all positions is published every issue on the back page for your ready reference, but let's put faces to names in this line-up.

Greg Thomas
Training
Auto Frost
Milperra NSW



John Bish
Training
J & N Bish
Auto Air
Hornsby NSW

Bevan Carrick
Qld Committee
Chairman
Cooltemp
Darra



Terry Gately
Qld Committee
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Shailer Park



Roger Boa
NSW Committee
Rog-Air-Gas
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NSW Committee
Dash Auto Air
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Peter Dodds
NSW Insurance
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Phil Wilson
NSW Insurance
Replacement
Compressor
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John Wallace
NSW Insurance
Cool Drive
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Moorabbin

Brian Wilkinson
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Committee
Nanbri
Automotive
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Keith Murray
Victoria Committee
Nanbri Automotive
Clayton



Kevin Matthews
WA Committee
Auto Air (Aust)
Morley



Paul Robinson
WA Committee
Car Air Systems
Bayswater

David Pude
Qld Training
Summercool
Car Air
Milton

Congratulations ... from AAMI

Dear Steve

RE: VASA Conference on the Gold Coast

I'm writing to congratulate you, your staff and the members of VASA who were involved in putting together VASA's conference on the Gold Coast. It was informative, very professional and could only be described as first class.

For me the conference was an opportunity to resolve some of the questions that have been outstanding for some time, gave me a better understanding of the issues surrounding retrofitting/flushing and helped distil the fragments of information bouncing around within this industry.

I believe I now have a clearer understanding of the issues which will enhance AAMI's policy in this area. I am most interested in VASA's intention to form a committee to

work closer with insurers on air conditioning issues. I am also keen to see what VASA can do to help move the debate on alternate gases forward in Victoria.

Once again, congratulations on your conference.

Craig Cooley
Technical Services
AAMI, Victoria

The FIVE Messages from IMACA's Frank Allison

IMACA executive director Frank Allison, keynote speaker at the convention, gave five clear messages for the future of the air conditioning industry.

While his messages are related to the US industry, history shows that what happens there, sooner or later happens here. However, Australia is up to date in some areas, notably the attitude of the OEM's towards retrofits.

The US mobile air conditioning service industry boasts 636,900 technicians, with a total of 368,000 establishments offering service for automobiles. The number of establishments servicing motor vehicle air conditioning is 193,000.

Here's Frank's five messages:-

1 FLAMMABLES

The "sham retrofit" has emerged in the US because of the confusing legislation on refrigerant gases.

Shonky workshops are using these loop holes in the regulations:- flammable refrigerant is **ILLEGAL** as a replacement for CFC-12; but flammable refrigerant is **LEGAL** as a replacement for HFC-134a. The sale of flammable refrigerants is also **LEGAL**.

In the sham retrofit, the customer

is told his vehicle is being converted to 134a, then half an hour later, they convert it to take flammables.

In Australia, in those states which have already legislated, the position is clear – you simply can't use flammables in any mobile air conditioning system which is not specifically designed for flammables. However, VASA must remain vigilant in those states which are still thinking about the legislation, or still being swayed by the flammable lobby.



2 R-12 SUPPLY

The cost, of course, has gone through the roof. However, while the independent service shops are experiencing shortages, it is believed large quantities of R-12 have been stockpiled by the OEM companies and large retail independent parts and service chains. The OEM's want to keep the car dealers stocked with R-12 for servicing existing R-12 fleets. This is an interesting trend, because in Australia, the OEM's are taking a more advanced view, preferring to follow the mono-refrigerant retrofit trend.

3 BLENDS

Few comprehensive studies have been done, which confirm materials compatibility. Studies have been done on R-12 and R134a, but not on blends.

* No comprehensive studies have been done on fractionation

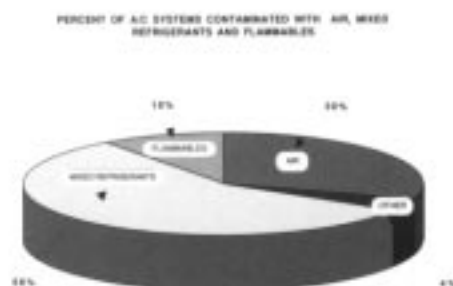
from blend manufacturers.

- * Blends are not recyclable.
- * Blends cannot be vented in the US – they require separate and dedicated recovery equipment.
- * Blends are not readily available in all parts of the US.
- * Blends are three to five times the cost of HFC-134a.

4 CONTAMINATION

The 1996 retrofit survey in the US conducted by IMACA clearly revealed the alarming percentage of air contamination in air conditioning systems (30%).

HOT AIR will be running a separate story on this issue alone because it is a looming problem in cylinders and equipment in Australia.



5 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The only way independent service providers can maintain a competitive edge in the future will be through customer satisfaction in these areas:-

- * Courtesy
- * A clean shop operation
- * Product knowledge
- * Professionalism
- * Fair pricing
- * Willingness to adjust mistakes

.....and finally, the only way to achieve results will be through 'training, training and training', and attending to the business side of the business.

FLAMMABLES – One by one, common sense prevails

The South Australian cabinet has approved controls over the use of flammable hydrocarbon refrigerants in automotive air conditioning systems.

An amendment to the Dangerous Substances Regulations will require that equipment used with flammable hydrocarbon refrigerants must be:-

- 1 Specifically designed for the use of those refrigerants; or
- 2 Approved for that use by either the manufacturer of the system or (if fitted as original equipment) by the manufacturer of the vehicle; or
- 3 Certified as safe for use by a third party Competent Person; or
- 4 Assessed as safe to do so after presentation and acceptance of a full and comprehensive safety report.

The amendment was expected to be promulgated by the end of September.

VASA has maintained the flow of accurate and proven information to all governments over the past year.

Currently, only two states are acting coy about adopting regulations on the use of hydrocarbons – Western Australia and Victoria.

Here's a round-up, state by state, prepared by public relations committee member Chris Lindeman.

NEW SOUTH WALES

The NSW Dangerous Goods Act prohibits any person putting liquefied flammable gas in a motor

vehicle air conditioner including off-road, rail and agricultural equipment.

Mis-information in respect to NSW withdrawing the regulation under the Mutual Recognition Act has proved to be exactly that, mis-information. In fact, the New South Wales Government has announced its intention to extend the regulation to include stationary plant similar to other State regulations.

QUEENSLAND

The Queensland Government has introduced changes to the Gas Act restricting the use of flammable gases in most forms of refrigeration and air conditioning including vehicles.

A requirement of these restrictions is that an authorisation has to be granted after approval from the original equipment manufacturer or approval from the Chief Gas Examiner. To date no Authorisation has been granted to allow the use of hydrocarbon refrigerants in vehicle air conditioning systems.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

The Northern Territory has enacted similar regulations allowing the use of hydrocarbon as refrigerant only if the equipment is specifically designed to accept them or if the original equipment manufacturer authorises the use in writing.

AUST. CAPITAL TERRITORY

The ACT has announced that controls in line with those introduced in Queensland will be introduced this year.

TASMANIA

Tasmania introduced similar regulations to those of Queensland and The Northern Territory with a further emphasis on specific training for any person working with hydrocarbon refrigerants.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australia will amend its Dangerous Substance Regulations, anticipated before the end of September this year, to include restrictions on the use of hydrocarbon gases as a refrigerant, similar to Queensland, Northern Territory and Tasmania.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia appeared earlier this year to be opposed to regulating the use of hydrocarbon as refrigerant and had been subjected to intense lobbying by the hydrocarbonists. However, submissions by VASA and others may lead to further consideration following national discussions on the subject.

VICTORIA

Victoria has so far shunned any regulation on the use of hydrocarbons, but VASA and others are playing major roles in building and supplying a huge weight of evidence against the unregulated use of hydrocarbon as a refrigerant. VASA has asked Victorian legislators to broaden the scope and depth of their advice to include all sections of the industry.

The now customary auction of goods kindly donated by members and suppliers for the annual Convention charity drive netted a remarkable \$11,120.

The fund will be split between the Gold Coast Salvation Army, represented by Captain Kevin McGrath and the Queensland Variety Club, who donated its regional manager David Childs who gave a sterling performance as auctioneer. The money is earmarked for the needy kids.



The Hot Hot Hotties, students from Helensvale High School, pictured here with Mark Mitchell, VASA President and Frank Allison, IMACA, brought a 'hot' performance to the theme of the convention.



David Childs



Captain Kevin McGrath

Hot Hot Hot! 97 Trade Exhibition

The 1997 VASA Trade exhibition was voted the best yet. It is now the recognised showcase for the automotive air conditioning industry in Australia. For the first time on the Gold Coast, the Exhibition was thrown open to all comers.



Bevan Carrick from Cooltemp in Brisbane, shares technologies with Robert Thompson of Davies Craig.



Laurent Plano, Frozen Air's production manager from Melbourne, talks with Eric Dobbie of Javac, Sydney.



Ian Christie from Air 2000 in Melbourne (right), with Paul Dunne of BOC Brisbane.



Melbourne Auto-Air staffers, Mark Blamire (left) and Chris Bent (right), with CPS Products' Brett Spicer of Adelaide.



Daniel Thomas of P J Evans and Co in Rockhampton Qld, talks with Carparts' John Everding.



Alister Baillie of Car Air Systems minds the stand while Geoff Merritt discusses products with Betty Johnson of Mermaid Waters. Betty was looking after the interests of son Geoff Johnson of Johnson Products Australia.

Hot Hot Hot! 97 Trade Exhibition



Chris Howard of Coolway Air in Adelaide (right), with Daryl Brougham, from Car Aire in Adelaide.



For sheer innovation, the Dead Air Cemetery, presented as a Heritage Stand for VASA, took the cake. Its perpetrators were Sarah Gallagher, Steve Whitelock and Jasen Lane from Cooltemp in Brisbane. Sarah was also responsible for pulling most of Hot Hot Hot convention logistics together and was given top marks by the conventioners.



Geoff Johnson of Carlton (left) with Arie Oosterveen from Freeze Equip, Wickham.



At Melbourne Auto-Air's stand, Andrew Kavanagh of Melbourne, chats with Carl Heslop of Elf Atochem in Sydney.



Justin O'Sughrue of Nippon, Melbourne, with international visitors Dave Schenck of Worldaire International Inc of Fort Worth Texas and Henry Sia of Nagoya Automotive, Singapore.



SuperCool, Gold Coast, used the Unicla stand to announce their appointment of Australian distributors of Unicla compressors. Parts manger Robert Houston (right) shows a new breed of compressor to Neil Morikawa from Japan who recently joined Denso in Melbourne.

Hot Hot Hot! 97 Trade Exhibition



Karl Priestly from Tridon, shows his brochures to Roger Boa of RogAir in Sydney.



Keith Davis of Queensland Auto Airconditioning in Brisbane (left) with Steve Binnie of Sydney.



Steve Binnie of K D Binnie Engineering, Sydney (left) with Javac's Eric Dobbie of Sydney.



Cooltemp export officer, Jasen Lane, talking with Ron and Melody McDermott of Skyline Displays, Brisbane.



John Kingsbury of Pro Em Gases, Gold Coast (left) and Monte Wilson of Pro Em Gases Sydney, with Sanden's Mark Padwick.



Allan Ould from T.R.X. in Perth (left), with James Russell of AKTF in Sydney.

Hot Hot Hot! 97 Trade Exhibition



Robert Higginbottom of Melbourne, was delighted to have international keynote speaker Frank Allison of IMACA, USA, visit his stand.



Imperial Eastman's Graham Bailey (left) and Roy Thompson (right), have Karl Priestly of Tridon Sydney, well covered.



Craig Pattison of Nippon Air Parts in Melbourne (left), in conversation with Ingram's Shane Quaille (centre) and Angelo Talarico, both of Melbourne.



Paul O'Shea of Sanden in Sydney, shows an interest in Kysor products, shown by Brett Campbell from Melbourne.



The 1997 VASA Trade Show was well attended over the three days.



If you would like to purchase any of the photographs published in these pages please contact:
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 2 Acanthus Avenue, Burleigh Heads Qld
 Phone: (07) 5520 0002

VASA will introduce a Registered Technicians Program (RTP) early in 1998 to ensure a new level of professionalism in every VASA member workshop.

The Program is seen as crucial to survival of the after-market industry in an era where sophisticated vehicle technology demands service to match.

When RTP is introduced, every member workshop will be required to enrol at least one person. This puts real meaning into VASA membership.

A VASA Responsibility

Raising the standard of technicians is written into the VASA Mission.

VASA already has an elective/ad hoc training system, but the RTP is expected to greatly improve training and delivery of information on technologies and trends.

It must be stressed that the RTP will not replace the training programs.

Formalised training will continue to play a big role in raising and maintaining standards.

The RTP will work in tandem with formalised training and workplace experience. The industry will soon see the benefits of having their technicians and associated personnel being respected as the true professionals of the industry.

Training chairman Grant Hand points out that the initiative is fluid – it is subject to revision and change as required or requested – particularly in its formulation stage.

Since the program is directly aimed at members and their needs, feedback is actively sought through the relevant State committee and/or through the National Public Relations, Technical or Training committees.

Responding to Change

The modern vehicle is of high standard, more reliable, technically advanced and more energy efficient than ever.

As a service industry and realistically the professional sector of that service

RTP IS HERE



Registered Training Will Be The Key To Survival

industry, VASA members must provide service in line with industry and manufacturing standards.

The service we provide must be of the highest calibre. We are not suggesting that we price ourselves out of the market. Professional service does not necessarily mean increased costs – it simply means doing the job properly and with maximum efficiency (minimum diagnostic and lost time).

Good business management, good customer relations and fair pricing policy together with the professional service ethic will help ensure our continued survival in the industry.

Being armed with the latest technical information, industry trends, and being aware of new service equipment and new product releases will increase the quality and efficiency of VASA members' businesses.

Aims of the Program

To provide a low cost, broad based program to:

- update skills and knowledge
- keep abreast with technology
- provide up to date information – OEM and field test data
- further knowledge in both refrigeration and electrical/electronic circuitry/switching/controls

- provide exposure to new product releases.

Program Format

Participants will be issued with technical bulletins and associated questionnaires (nominally bi monthly) to be completed and returned for assessment. Additional information will be distributed as required.

Certification, in the form of a certificate and uniform logo, will be issued at the completion of a 12-month program.

Who is Eligible

Any member and their staff are eligible. All members will be required to enrol one person in the program. This helps guard against the variable standards that now exists where members join simply for signage rights and associated commercial benefits with little or no regard for training staff and/or keeping up with technology and industry needs.

The Costs

This is a non-profit program. Early research shows that fees should be around \$75 per enrollment, to cover costs of research and development of material, royalty costs for information, printing and associated costs of distribution of materials etc.

Ultimately, fees will reflect the numbers enrolling in the program.

The Future

It is envisaged that the program will expand into formulation and distribution of literature and materials for training at all levels, particularly for members in remote areas.

Expansion of a VASA library, both in hard copy and virtual (via the Internet VASA home page) will provide members with information they can access at any time. The growth of the program among members will drive these initiatives.

Maintenance of high standards in line with technological advancements is crucial for the future of members. Some franchise groups have failed because they did not maintain standards. The reputation of our industry will to a large extent be governed by the standards we set ourselves – with no weak links.

HAIL! THE PIONEERS



George Jackson reminisces



Norman Bilton with Mark Mitchell



Norm as Batman and Mark Padwick as Robin being sent up

The Pioneers Award, inaugurated at the 1996 convention in Sydney has quickly become a highlight of the annual talkfest.

At Hot Hot Hot Convention, the awarding of two industry characters, Norman Bilton and George Jackson turned into a mini-Oscar celebration. George Jackson's response was heartfelt and stimulating – coming from a man of an incredibly young 82 years who is still in the business.

The send-up of Norman and fellow Sanden big wig Mark Padwick (alias Batman and Robin) was the star turn of the evening.

Norman has been involved in mobile air conditioning from the very beginning, guiding Sanden through the changes which have made the company the driving force behind the auto air conditioning technologies which influenced the direction of the after market industry.

He is the doyen of the Australian auto air industry. He arrived in Australia nearly 20 years ago from Sanden's Singapore office.

Norman was introduced to the air conditioning business in Hong Kong, through the likes of Bob Wallace Jones & Mitchell Discal.

It's probably best not to ask just what they did back in those days for fear of resurrecting practices we all hope will stay forgotten.

Norman moved to Sanden when Sanden started making the SD compressor and so has been a part of Sanden's growth to its pre-eminent position in the worldwide industry today.

He is moving to a new position in head office in Tokyo, but we will no doubt see him back here often – if not to sell us compressors, then certainly to buy a few beers for his old mates.

George Jackson is a true pioneer – not just because he happens to be 82 years of age, but because he has contributed greatly to our industry.

George hasn't yet revealed plans for his retirement. He still imports some air conditioning components and he is still Australian agent for Ogura clutches, a loyal association between manufacturer and distributor which goes back to the sixties.

George's association with air conditioning goes back a lot further, when he started with Mitchell Discal in America.

He was involved with the first exports of the most famous of all

after marketing air conditioning units, the Mark IV back in 1949. The first units went to the US servicemen stationed in Japan.

George was with Mitchell Discal when it began trading in Hong Kong in 1963, with his partner, Wayne Fogelstorm.

In 1967, through Mitchell Discal, the Mark IV was brought to Australia and George had a great deal to do with the promotion of air conditioning as an essential to driving in Australian conditions.

He started his own firm, Mobile Air Parts, changed it to Palm Air in 1973, and then later sold this to his employees.

He continues to dabble in the industry which he helped to found.

WHO'S GOT IT??

A VacuRack prize, donated by Car Aire, has gone missing from the back of the function room at Royal Pines on the night of the Gala Dinner.

It was one of three prizes, and was won by Les Bennell of Brisbane.

If anyone knows of the whereabouts of this VacuRack, Les would be grateful if you would call him direct on 07 3821 0852.

A Big Hand for Grant

The work of VASA's chief trainer Grant Hand was recognised by the industry at the Hot Hot Hot convention on the Gold Coast.



Grant gets his award from Mark Mitchell
"He is unique to our industry," said president Mark Mitchell.

"Grant spoke with great passion at our convention. He noted – as many of us have – the low spirits of people in the industry. Many people are wringing their hands and crying "woe is me".

"Grant told the meeting today – "if you want to live - get more knowledge" – "if you want to die, go away in a corner and do it." Maybe it's the sort of shock treatment people need," said Mark.

"Grant speaks with great passion – to think that someone can have so much passion about auto air conditioning is a bizarre notion. But Grant has it – and he passes it on to his classes.

"When I see Grant Hand in action, I think of the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who said "Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm. Nothing great was ever achieved without it.

"On the other hand – the worst bankrupt in the world is the man who has lost his enthusiasm.

"VASA owes Grant a great vote of thanks for his knowledge, enthusiasm and passion. I can only trust he continues to help guide our members and their technicians through the coming years so that we can all be smarter, better at it, and more profitable," added president Mitchell.



Sarah Gallagher awards Grant the world's most revolting tie.



"We wish to express our appreciation for the invitation and opportunity to attend the 1997 VASA conference. On behalf of Peter Lewis and myself we believe the exhibition, technical presentations and the gala dinner proved the professionalism and leadership of the VASA committee and members.

Elf Atochem as the largest producer CFC alternatives worldwide would be pleased to assist you and your members where possible on technical and market issues in the future, so please do not hesitate to contact us.

*Carl Heslop, Elf Atochem
(Australia) Pty Ltd*

"....congratulate VASA and especially the 1997 convention team on an excellent convention. In particular, the trade show was by far the best yet."

*Les Bennell Automotive
Airconditioning, Cleveland, Qld*

NSW Gets Serious About Insurance Relationships

New South Wales members will be asked to respond to a series of questionnaires initiated by the new Insurance Committee in that state, in a bid to firm up the relationship between members and the insurance companies.

Outlining the initiatives, new committee chairman Peter Dodds said the first questionnaire would be despatched within weeks of the Gold Coast convention.



He has appealed to all members to express their opinions and respond by the due date.

"We are eager to make contact with all insurance companies and promote VASA as a specialist association. But before this can happen, we must be in agreement and unified, so that every approach to an insurance company is structured and ultimately an advantage to all VASA members," said Peter.

The committee's objectives are:-

- 1 That VASA members become the technical advisory body to whom insurance companies can call for advice.
- 2 To promote and cement a relationship that is paramount to both insurer and repairer and to promote what we believe are industry best practices in regard to vehicle air conditioning.

POST CONVENTION and TRADE SHOW QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you all for your quick response and comments. Melbourne Auto Air were the lucky winners of the \$100 Christmas Hamper.

The El Niño and its part in your profitability

The air conditioning industry depends so heavily on the weather patterns that Hot Air thought it would be interesting to run regular features on the weather patterns, to try to forecast whether the next summer season is going to be long and hot.

The El Niño phenomenon is mentioned in all weather reports. It's a disturbance in the climatic state of the equatorial Pacific Ocean that has an impact on the state of the climate over much larger regions.

It creates effects on the climate that simply can't be ignored....like the fact that in 1993 Australia experienced massive drought and devastating bushfires and that the monsoons failed in the Indian Ocean.

Most scientists are convinced that some form of teleconnection causes a response to the El Niño far removed from the apparent source region in the equatorial Pacific. It continues to be a very active area of research.

Now to the available forecasts for Spring 1997.

Rainfall during August was significantly below average across much of eastern and northern New South Wales, southern Queensland, southern Victoria, northern Tasmania and parts of southwest Western Australia. Since the onset of the current El Niño event at the beginning of autumn, there has been an expansion of the area experiencing abnor-

mally dry conditions.

Dry autumn and winter weather was experienced over an area covering virtually all of Victoria, most of New South Wales and eastern South Australia, northern and eastern Tasmania, and parts of southwest Western Australia.

Indicators of an El Niño event continue and are unusually strong. The waters in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean have warmed to such a degree that they have reached record high values for this time of year.

The latest outputs from computer models confirm the historical pattern of development, and point to a high probability of strong El Niño conditions persisting for the remainder of the year. **Consequently, eastern Australia faces a serious risk of total spring rainfall being significantly below average. This will exacerbate the current dry conditions and lead to an early onset to the period of high fire danger.**

Also, early wet season rainfall is likely to be suppressed over tropical parts of the country. Those areas most at risk of recording significantly below average rainfall for the September to November period cover much of eastern Australia.



VASA READY REFERENCE DIRECTORY

1997

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