

# Hot Air



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Newsletter of the Vehicle Airconditioning Specialists of Australasia  
Post-Convention & December Edition 1999

National Secretariat: VASA (ACN 063 969 783) 30 Lexton Road Box Hill Vic 3128

## National Warranty Plan may begin early in 2000

**T**HE PROPOSED national warranty scheme for VASA members, which was given the green light by those at the national service forum in Melbourne in late August, is likely to be introduced early next year.

The special steering committee which is fine-tuning the plan, has

already held its first major review meeting on the Gold Coast and is well on the way to its final recommendations to the directors.

**The warranty scheme's main features are:**

- It will give VASA workshops a much needed competitive edge
- It will assist in customer retention
- It will ensure only the highest standards of workshop practices among members

The proposal was developed by a firm of underwriters with experience in the motor trades.

A national warranty scheme is seen as a means of improving VASA workshop market share in

the competitive auto airconditioning installation, repair and maintenance field and can be used as a consumer marketing tool by workshops. It will be a voluntary scheme.

The warranty terms would encourage specific annual servicing and system check-up.

Most importantly, it will virtually



make it compulsory for participating VASA workshops to raise their service and repair standards and diagnostic skills.

The initial proposal is for a three year, 100,000 km warranty program for the exclusive use of VASA members. It would be free to VASA workshop customers.

It would be accessible for all customers who have their airconditioning system serviced or repaired by a VASA workshop. The warranty will cover major component part replacements as specified in the proposed warranty book. (The installing VASA workshop would have to fit the components to VASA standards and maintain a warranty book-keeping). *Continued Page 3*

## VASA LOWERS THE BOOM ON MULTI- REFRIGERANT PEDLARS

**T**HE VASA executive is prepared to throw members out of its association if they are caught selling gas blends or hydrocarbons for use in motor vehicles.

This strong stand by Australasia's only professional body of airconditioning suppliers, installers and repairers (Vehicle Airconditioning Specialists of Australasia) is in accordance with its policy, adopted about five years ago and is in response to continuing efforts of some importers to flood the market with blends and hydrocarbons.

In the light of Australia's moves to recycle and reclaim refrigerant gas, the blends and hydrocarbons have the ability to contaminate the national auto gas stream to the point where more gas is destroyed than reclaimed. Eventually, this could result in higher prices for gas, which will have to be met by consumers.

Coupled with this fresh edict to its own members, VASA has called on the motoring public to pay closer attention to the type of refrigerant gas their repairers put in airconditioning units and to demand only what the manufacturers stipulate – R134a.

*Continued Page 10*

# www.vasa.org.au

## **www.vasa.org.au is up and running and the members are taking to it with enthusiasm.**

The national executive, who previewed the site at their pre-convention meeting in Melbourne, gave it the big thumbs up.

President Mark Mitchell and the directors are now more determined than ever to make the internet VASA's prime communication centre.

All directors and committee members have logged in with their own personal passwords and the members are responding well.

### **THE PAPER TRAIL IS DISAPPEARING FAST**

As information comes in, it goes into the secured pages for members, directors or committees and the onus is then on the members to go on line regularly to see what's in the "in basket".



It is really no different than going to the post office every day to clear the mail...only with our website, you simply turn on the computer and a couple of key-strokes later, you are reading material which might have been posted only minutes before by the directors.

For an organisation like VASA, which is a non-profit, self help, mainly volunteer group, adopting web based communication is a big and significant step in the right direction.

### **VASA will virtually be able to run itself over the internet.**

According to Mark Mitchell, it will only be a matter of time before

connection to the internet will be as essential to VASA membership as having a set of tools and a proficiency in airconditioning.

It's likely that within 12 months, all RTP and the magazine Hot Air, will be published only on the internet.



Certainly, there's a cost attached to maintaining the internet site and keeping the ideas fresh and up to date, but it's a small price to pay for the immediacy of the web, the ability to keep members informed quickly and easily and the savings in print costs, postage and handling.

### **Features of www.vasa.org.au**

#### **MEMBERS**

(RESTRICTED PAGE FOR MEMBERS ONLY)

- Logging on and password management
- Members Lounge area
- Feedback Page – direct link to the President
- Important Dates – meetings, convention, workshops
- Member to member message centre
- Urgent announcements from the directors and committees Includes archive of previous messages so no-one can ever again say "...but you didn't tell me..."
- New members
- RTP pages (still under construction) Will contain all RTP back to Year 1 - 1998
- Technical Library (to be added to regularly) already contains Orifice Tube Pressure Chart, and Refrigerant Capacity Guide
- Members notice board
- Post your own



messages on any subject

- Read what other members have to say
- Reply to or comment on any message

#### **DIRECTORS**

(RESTRICTED PAGE FOR DIRECTORS ONLY)

Message centre only – read by the directors at least daily

#### **COMMITTEES**

(RESTRICTED PAGE FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS ONLY)

Message centre only – read by the committee members at least daily



#### **HELP FOR CAR OWNERS**

- How VASA helps the motoring public, with links to all members

#### **CURRENT ISSUES**

- Items of immediacy on VASA's current project or thinking

#### **ANNUAL CONVENTION**

- Complete wrap-up on the 1999 convention in Melbourne
- PowerPoint download of President Mark Mitchell's entire AGM presentation
- Social pics
- Speakers and their presentations. PowerPoint downloads of those presentations which were available
- The Annual General Meeting With links to all elected directors and committees, photos and contact details
- The Big Night And Presentations
- Trade Exhibition Pics
- Pioneer Awards
- Trade show – with pictures of every trade booth
- The How, Why, When and Where of the Auckland New Zealand convention in July 2000. To contain full detail of next convention as soon as it becomes available – keep watching.

# Calsonic's Plea: Stay Professional



Calsonic MD Bob Pattison opens the 1999 Trade Show door

New director lineup with Bob Pattison – from left: Glen Watkinson, Tony Heat, Mark Mitchell, Barry Rogers and John Blanchard.



**WORKMANSHIP, service and constant training were the prerequisites for the future success of VASA, according to Bob Pattison, managing director of Calsonic Australia.**

At the official opening of the VASA 99 trade show in Melbourne, Bob indicated that Calsonic was delighted to be associated with a group whose professionalism was recognised.

"Your professionalism is critical to your future image, because there a lot of backyarders in the business," added Bob.

"We understand how important the aftermarket is for airconditioning systems and we are out to

increase our involvement. Aftermarket is a dynamic industry, going through major changes.

"There are many opportunities, especially for members of VASA who have shown themselves to be open minded and receptive to future technologies.

"However, it will be constant training and attention to service and working practices which will keep VASA members at the forefront of their industry," Bob added.

"You have a professional and hard working executive which makes VASA very persuasive and a powerful lobby group."

Calsonic Australia were major sponsors of the 99 convention, having made association history by contributing the biggest single sponsorship. Calsonic have indicated they wish to continue an association with VASA, at Convention 2000 in Auckland.

## National Warranty Plan may begin early in 2000

... Continued from Page 1

The idea is to offer warranty terms that are in line with market trends and align with the warranties applicable on new cars and those issued by motor dealer networks.

Airconditioning components would be sold and fitted through VASA workshops nationwide and tracked through their fitting and onwards servicing life.

It attempts to retain the servicing of the equipment and the relative airconditioning system within VASA workshops.

The installing VASA workshop would have to fit the components to VASA standards, purchase a warranty book and issue the warranty to the customer.

## Car Sales to Dive

**THE sale of all types of vehicles is expected to fall dramatically across Australia in the current financial year.**

This was revealed by Gary Burt, general manager of Martec, in his address at VASA convention.

All vehicle sales are forecast to fall by 12.6% over the 1998/99 year, with the biggest drop expected in trucks (23.5% fall). Passenger vehicle sales are expected to be 12.5% down on the last year and commercials, 11.7% down.

All vehicle sales over the three years amounted to 776,700 in 1997/98, 805,800 in 1998/99 and 704,600 forecast for the current financial year.

# fun, sport and technology

## VASA '99

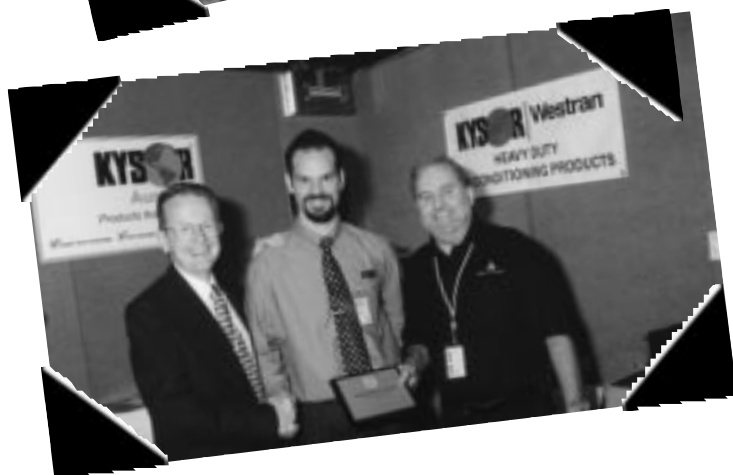
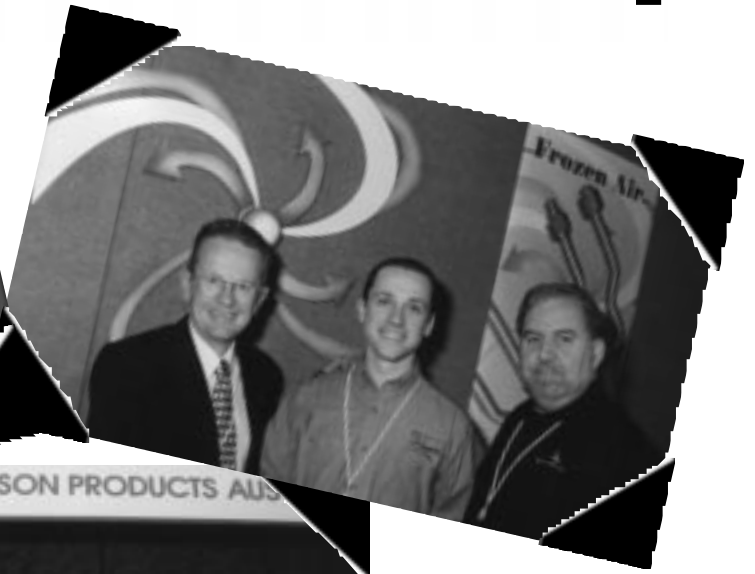
## TRADE SHOW Gallery



# fun, sport and technology

## VASA '99

## TRADE SHOW Gallery



# fun, sport and technology

## VASA '99

## TRADE SHOW Gallery



# fun, sport and technology

## VASA '99

## TRADE SHOW Gallery



## THE DATES ARE SET FOR AUCKLAND 2000



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**The dates are set for VASA convention in Auckland New Zealand – Thursday 20 to Sunday 23 July 2000.**

For a totally different VASA experience, this will be the place to be next July. With the possibility of good deals being organised with the airlines, it may not be as expensive as you might think.

The hotel rates already quoted are the equivalent of around AUD\$140 a night and that's considerably cheaper than the

Australian inner city hotels have been charging.

Arrangements are in early days, but we'll publish a lot more in Hot Air in the new year and the website [www.vasa.org.au](http://www.vasa.org.au) will carry convention details as they occur, so keep watching.

Convention organisation is in the hands of Barry Rogers phone +64 9 573 3392 or fax +64 9 573 3395 or email [auckautoair@clear.net.nz](mailto:auckautoair@clear.net.nz).

Suppliers interested in sponsoring or taking trade space in the South Pacific's biggest auto airconditioning trade show should contact Barry.

The organisers are also considering widening the scope of the trade show to include suppliers outside direct airconditioning, so if you feel you need to reach the specialists of the a/c trade with your product, give Barry a call and discuss it with him.

As part of its plan to assist members to trade more profitably and improve their market share, VASA invited Westpac to present its Eftpos options to members at the VASA stand in Melbourne. It is in the context of the convention and Westpac's response to develop a VASA "package" that *Hot Air* runs this feature.

## Accept card payments and watch your business profitability grow

**Customers today are looking for a variety of payment solutions to choose from. Whether payments are made face to face, over the phone or via the internet, cards are becoming the preferred choice of payment by consumers. One of the reasons that consumers often choose to pay with cards is to accumulate points associated with frequent flyer and other loyalty programs.**

*– Did you know:*

- 1 in every 6 transactions in Australia today is made with a card.
- 3 out of every 5 card transactions is a debit card transaction.
- An estimated 15% and 28% of all household expenditure will be attributed to debit and credit card transactions by the year 2002.

You can benefit in a number of ways by accepting both credit and debit cards. Not only can you increase your card sales but also reduce your operational costs. Handling less cash and cheques saves you time with less trips to the bank and more time with your customers. It also gives you peace of mind as hassles

associated with lengthy invoicing or fraud and errors caused due to omissions are greatly reduced.

Depending on your business requirements you can choose between manual and electronic processing facilities. Electronic payment options such as EFTPOS gives you the convenience of online authorisation and automatic settlement of funds to your account. Above all quick transaction processing times means that you won't keep your customers waiting.

Your business can benefit from a range of merchant solutions including EFTPOS, Mobile EFTPOS and Internet Payment Solutions as they help you to increase your sales, profitability and customer satisfaction.

### **The VASA and Westpac exclusive merchant package**

VASA and Westpac have worked together to offer you an exclusive merchant package full of solutions at a discounted merchant fee.

#### **Facility Discounted Merchant Service Fee**

<i>Electronic</i>	1.55%
<i>Manual</i>	2.40%

Members will benefit from discounted prices, market leading products and Westpac's excellent customer support service.

### **Apply today**

Westpac's EFTPOS EXTRA is the lightest, smallest and fastest terminal available in the market today. A special application form along with an EFTPOS EXTRA flyer has been attached with this newsletter, simply complete the form and fax it to Attn: Andrew Sammons on (02) 9876 9274 or call Merchant Business Solutions on toll free 1800 029 749.

If you're an experienced internet user and/or are looking to trade online then find out about Westpac Internet payment solutions. Westpac has partnered with three leading strategic e-commerce solutions providers in bringing an online secure payments environment for card transactions.

**Westpac Banking Corporation**  
ARBN 007 457 141. Also trading as  
**Bank of Melbourne and Challenge Bank.**



## **One door closes. . . . . .another opens**

**The rapidly changing face of climate control technology in vehicles will elevate Australasia's workshops displaying the VASA logo to an exclusive core of specially trained technical experts.**

"Our day is yet to come", says VASA president Mark Mitchell, who said the move to high tech and computerised systems in all aspects of vehicle operation would also herald the gradual end of the backyard mechanic and "gas jockey."

The Vehicle Airconditioning Specialists of Australasia, at their annual convention in Melbourne in late August, were told that there wasn't a car coming off any assembly line in Australia without climate control already fitted.

"While this means the end of aftermarket installation to a large degree, it translates to a new beginning for those highly trained VASA technicians and their workshops," said Mr Mitchell.

"Our emphasis on training, underpinned by Australasia's first structured Registered Technicians Program which began in 1998, has placed VASA members in a strong position to be the key people who will look after the huge national fleet of airconditioned vehicles.

"The quick regass is no longer a quick fix, so we will soon see the end of the gas jockeys who have tried unsuccessfully to fool consumers into thinking that a shot of refrigerant gas will fix everything.

"As sophisticated technical equipment breaks down, it will take highly trained VASA specialists to correctly diagnose and fix the problems," added Mr

Mitchell.

He said the 1999 Convention will go down as the one at which VASA rediscovered its sense of quality and professionalism.

"VASA's original passion after six years of conventions and seven years of operation has not flagged," he said.

"The convention speakers reinforced our rebirth, taking us on a journey of technology discovery and helping us to pinpoint more precisely where we should be directing our efforts.

"Unless airconditioning technicians really come up to speed with training in diagnostics, climate control and modern refrigerant principles, they are not going to be in the race in the next century," Mr Mitchell added.

The Convention in July 2000, will be held in Auckland, New Zealand.

# PIONEER AWARDS

**THREE AIRCONDITIONING industry pioneers were honoured at VASA 99 convention in Melbourne.**

They were Damien Petrie, founder of Bonny Auto Air in Malvern Victoria, Brian Haley, founder of Autotrak Automotive and All Cab Airconditioning in Essendon Victoria and Bruce Griffiths, Managing Director of Air International in Melbourne.

They bring to seven the number of awards which have been made since the practise began in 1996.



**Damien Petrie**

WHY Damien earned the name of Bonny remains a mystery to this day. However, he started out as a technician in the Australian navy and then worked for a company servicing and repairing car radios.

He quickly found that the real adventure was working on the new airconditioning systems that his employer, A B Bar's were fitting. From here he found his way to Freeway Car Air in Malvern and after a few years started Bonny Auto Air in 1977.

He shared premises to start with at Moorabbin until he started an onsite service in that area from the back of his mini panel van. He continued in this fashion until he rented his own factory in 1984 where he has traded to this day.

He has trained many others in our industry and some of them are now successful in their own right.

Damien is a formidable supporter

of his own industry and its standards and for his continuing support of VASA, the directors thank him sincerely.



**Brian Haley**

BRIAN had no great love of school, preferring to earn his stripes in the workshops of which there were many in his career.

He began as a panel beater apprentice, moved to servicing volkswagons and pump fuel and by the ripe old age of 16 was working on towtrucks.

Brian was already on the way to being a big achiever and then he got his licence.

While still a young blade, he ran a wrecking business for a partnership and then began Autotrak Automotive in 1976, doing exhaust work and airconditioning. At one stage he had around 30 people fitting airconditioning to new cars and trucks. Two years later, he started the onsite fitting and servicing of airconditioning - the beginning of All Cab.

Brian orchestrated the takeover of AMC and has since then been designing and building his own heavyduty equipment for earthmoving machinery.

His mobile workshop was an old delivery truck, self contained with all the gear needed to build and manufacture mount and drive brackets. This developed into three trucks and four light commercials on the road full time. Brian is now semi retired, but keeps a close eye on the progress of his business.

Brian is one of those guys that if you are a young person just starting out, you would be doing yourselves the biggest favour by inviting him to spend a day in your business. His advice would astound and inspire you.



**Bruce Griffiths**

FOR someone who never intended working in the automotive industry, Bruce has come a long way.

He's seen Air International grow from a handful of employees selling add on kits to become an international operation, designing and making equipment for the worlds major car companies.

Bruce's passion was boats, but when his employer Bob Bones left to form a partnership with Owen John, called Air International, Bruce was invited to join them as sales manager.

On his first day, Owen showed Bruce around the factory and with great pride introduced him to the largest stock of compressors in the country - a pallet of 100.

Bruce was instrumental in giving Air International a great competitive edge, by moving from just manufacturing to installation and training, with a deal he made with Melbourne's biggest Holden dealer Reg Hunt.

He went on to gain an order for 5000 units in the first year they dealt direct with GMH, but in one year, they sold nearly 10,000 and went on to win orders for Torana, Sunbird and Gemini.

The big breakthrough was in 1977, when they won the first OEM contract to supply units for the 1978 commodore.

After going public and seeing the company through some trying times in the 80s, Bruce took over as managing director in 1992 when Alf John retired.

This man, who has a strong passion for winning, can look with pride at the growth of this company and the work it now provides for about 1,500 families in seven countries, extending to another

# There are lessons in the shifting culture of car maintenance

**T**HE whole culture of Australian car ownership and maintenance is changing rapidly, forcing a rethink on service and repair strategies of workshops at all levels.

The major dealerships, which traditionally provide after sales service on new cars, are suffering eroding profits and a rapidly changing mindset among car owners about warranties and service obligations.

Up till a generation ago, car owners treated their vehicle log book like the Holy Scriptures, dutifully booking in on the appointed day for the 'obligatory' service.

The mentality which is abroad today is mostly one of an expectation that technology will keep the car running no matter what, and "if it ain't broke - don't take it to a workshop". Computer owners understand this very well.

The industry itself has contributed to this changing culture through increased manufacturers' warranties, greater service intervals, a greater emphasis on replacement rather than repair and increased competition.

A vehicle service study by Martec

reveals that most motorists preferred to have their servicing done at the local garage (43%), rather than by the franchised dealer (32%).

The DIY sector is down to about 9% and expected to fall even lower as vehicle technology becomes baffling for anyone other than a highly skilled technician.

...and why aren't they going back to the dealers. Fifty-one percent said they were too expensive, 17% found their location inconvenient and 9% had reported a bad experience.

Protection of warranty provisions remains the biggest single reason for choosing their service provider, while convenient location (presumably the local garage) accounted for 20% of the reasons given for choosing a service centre.

68% of people will not use the franchised dealer after the warranty period has expired. A whopping 54% of new car owners in

the Martec survey said price was the main reason they did not go back to the dealer.

However, when it comes to making the decision about where to take the car for a service, the existence of trained technicians was the main reason given for selection of service centre, with price and value for money in second place. Convenient location was next, followed by trust.

***The moral to this story for VASA members is that customers are likely to consider access to trained technicians as being an essential prerequisite for booking in their vehicle for an airconditioning inspection or repair.***

***So having framed certificates of professionally trained techs hanging around the wall of the waiting room is not such a daffy idea.*** (Go to [www.vasa.org.au/convention/speakers.html](http://www.vasa.org.au/convention/speakers.html) for his full presentation)

## VASA LOWERS THE BOOM ON MULTI-REFRIGERANT PEDLARS

... Continued from page 1

"When members are admitted to VASA, they agree to stand by our mono-refrigerant policy. We intend calling members to account and face possible expulsion for selling or using refrigerants other than the adopted R134a," said President Mark Mitchell.

"VASA now has a strong reputation in government and the industry, so we stand to lose this hard earned credibility if members are caught out selling gas blends or hydrocarbons for use in motor vehicles," he added.

"Every professional organisation has its code of ethics and standards. Ours are well known, so what's the point of being a member if you intend to flaunt the policy you agree to uphold."

The VASA board of directors, at a recent meeting in Queensland, decided to take a firm stand against any member selling unauthorised gas.

"We don't care if it's a wholesaler or workshop, the VASA policy is clear.

"VASA supports a mono-refrigerant policy throughout the automotive air conditioning industry and recommends to members the refrigerant gas R134a as the preferred replacement gas for R12 in all automotive systems.

"This is the only gas which has been thoroughly tested to the satisfaction of the world's car and component manufacturers. We know the scientists are working on other gas alternatives, but that's well into the future. For the moment, R134a is a far better alternative for workshop practices and environmental recovery than any blend or hydrocarbon," said Mr

Mitchell.

This point of view is shared by most government authorities in Australia, to the point where the use of hydrocarbons in motor vehicles is totally banned in some states.

The VASA policy was adopted several years ago after consideration of the overriding importance of safety, both to members and consumers.

VASA does not recommend the use of hydrocarbon refrigerants or refrigerant blends of any kind in automotive air conditioning systems that are not designed specifically for their use. Any member who flouts this policy is not only threatening the credibility of the organisation but certainly not doing the right thing by consumers who are learning to trust the judgement of VASA members.

"We won't hesitate to take action," said Mr Mitchell.

**NEWS RELEASES**

Catalogue of all of VASA's media releases

**HOT AIR**

Every issue to date of Hot Air (since 1995) are available as PDF files – just click and download them and then print out on your office computer exactly as they appeared in print – contains a catalogue of all important issues covered by Hot Air, including:

- Training and RTP
- Technical issues
- Environmental responsibility and recycling
- Refrigerant gas issues
- Insurance industry liaison
- Airconditioning industry trends and forecasts

**POLICIES**

All VASA policies on Service, Membership, Training and Refrigerants

**SPONSORS**

All sponsors of VASA activities for the current year, with links to those with websites and important messages from some sponsors about new products or other issues

**TRAINING**

An explanation of the RTP  
Face to face training courses  
Links for course enrollments

**REFRIGERANT GAS**

Explanation of VASA's mono-refrigerant stance

**LINKS**

Pics and links to affiliates, MACS and IMACA (USA)

**MEMBERS LIST**

**Automotive Airconditioning Retail Installers and Repairers**

Search by map reference to states and NZ – every current member and contact details listed

**Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) of Airconditioning Systems or Components.**

Listed by state

**Wholesalers of Automotive Airconditioning Equipment, parts, refrigerant gas and new**

**airconditioning systems.**  
Listed by state

**Associates in related industries, including insurance, environmental agencies, government departments and others**

**INSURANCE REPAIRS**

Explanation of VASA's stance on insurance repairs. Includes Vehicle Airconditioning Repair Procedure for assessors to download

**HOW TO JOIN**

- Who can join
- Categories of membership
- Member benefits
- How to join
- Membership application form

**WHAT'S VASA**

Explanation of how VASA works, with links to full contact list of directors and committees

**EMAIL US**

A direct link to the Secretariat which can be used by any visitor to the site

**RTP – REGISTERED TECHNICIANS PROGRAM**

An expansion of the program and membership application form  
Links to the secured members pages where the RTP will be kept

**BUY AND SELL**

An interactive shop where anyone can post free classifieds and read what's for sale.

From now on, all new members will be asked to submit an internet email address and their website address if they have one.

This information is vital to all future communication.

The VASA membership list has been upgraded and it must accurately reflect every member's details.

So for all those members who are already on the internet, and whose email address we don't yet have, **PLEASE GO NOW TO [www.vasa.org.au](http://www.vasa.org.au)** and log on.



On the

President's

Mind



**IT'S NICE to know that VASA members think their President can put out all sorts of fires and can solve consumer problems for you.**

But there comes a time when enough is enough. Part of the responsibility of being a VASA member implies having an ability to work things out for yourself.

I get consumer complaints of my own regularly enough but it's part of our stock in trade to know how to handle customers.

We are supposed to know what action to take to make a customer a happy person rather than a disgruntled one who will tell all their friends what a shonky operation you run.

I am getting far too many calls from customers OF NON-MEMBERS, who have been referred to me by members, in the hope that I can "sort them out".

That's not the President's job and I won't be accepting any more calls of this kind.

VASA has much bigger issues to manage than individual consumer complaints. If they are serious enough, they will eventually reach the Directors, but please don't take the easy way out when yours, or someone else's customer complains, and flick them to me. **It's just not on any more.**

Thanks for your cooperation.

# Products and Corporate News

If you want to showcase your product or company on this page and on the VASA web site go to [www.vasa.org.au](http://www.vasa.org.au) and click on **Sponsors**.



JAVAC appointed Actrol exclusive distributor for Xtract-R refrigerant recovery unit.

Javac is Australia's largest manufacturer and exporter of high vacuum pumps and refrigeration and airconditioning service equipment. A 100% Australian owned company, with an internationally oriented outlook, Javac recently released the Xtract-R, the most advanced refrigerant recovery machine in the market today.

It has taken the American market by storm and is achieving solid sales in the competitive European market. Javac has appointed Actrol as their exclusive Australian distributor.

Designed and manufactured in Australia to meet the demands of international market research, the Xtract-R represents a new benchmark. Development of the Xtract-R utilised the in-house mechanical and electronic engineering expertise of Javac combined with the latest CAD tools and parallel engineering principles.

Javac is a past winner of the Banksia Environmental Award for contribution to refrigerant recycling. Xtract-R is the most advanced refrigerant recovery machine in the market today. A registered defence supplier and certified to AS/NZS ISO9001 Javac's selection of Actrol, Australia's leading independent and 100% Australian owned Refrigeration and airconditioning wholesaler leverages Actrol's Australia-wide distribution strength of 37 customer service centres and depots and sales and applications engineering expertise.

For further information regarding the Xtract-R visit your nearest Actrol branch.

Phone 03 9877 2055 (Vic/Tas), 02 9749 8383 (NSW), 07 3252 5591 (Qld), 08 8234 1191 (SA/NT) and 08 9277 5922 (WA).



## ELF ATOCHEM launches Forane guarantee program

Elf Atochem has launched an aggressive new campaign which highlights the guarantees which come with their Forane ® Refrigerants.

Airconditioning professionals who appreciate the qualifications of the authorities on this list, will understand why Elf Atochem is stressing this as their competitive edge in the refrigerant market.

- QUALITY- ISO standards for production plants and Elf Atochem's worldwide distribution centres
- COMPLIANCE - with government and industry standards - A1/A1 ASHRAE Refrigeration Standards, NICNAS and PAFT approvals
- UN (United Nations) approvals and CAS numbers
- DG (Dangerous Goods) Codes
- Hazchem Code approvals
- ISO, Bulk Tank and Cylinder approvals to Australian Standards for Pressure Vessels
- OEM approvals
- Supply ex the largest ISO approved bulk distribution centre in Australia
- Availability - throughout Australia from most refrigeration wholesalers
- Technical support in Australia and Worldwide
- Environment - compliance with "Environment Australia" regulations



## REFRIGERANT RECLAIM AUSTRALIA

DEALING with wastes is an increasingly complex issue for industry- especially in the motor vehicle industry.

Rising public expectations means that governments will increasingly put pressure on the industry to safely look after wastes.

Often governments can sheet home the legal responsibility to industry and costs are borne by one section of industry only.

No-one denies that we all have a responsibility to protect the environment. As VASA members know, in the case of R12, our responsibility is legal as well as moral (and who knows what might happen with new refrigerants in future).

But while happy to accept responsibility, VASA's position is that costs should be borne by the entire industry (and ultimately this means the consumer). One section of the industry should not be left with the bill.

This is why VASA has worked closely with RRA over the years and why waste refrigerant did not become the nightmare it could have.

Before RRA, we had the legal responsibility not to vent R12. When it was discovered that R12, the bread and butter of the industry, was harming the earth's ozone layer, all Australian states passed laws making it compulsory for this refrigerant to be recovered, recycled, reclaimed or safely destroyed.

All good stuff, but what were you supposed to do with the bottle of rubbish refrigerant in the corner of the workshop?

You couldn't really get rid of it, because there was nowhere to send it. You were stuck with it - a classified waste with nowhere to go. For many years in Australia, there was nowhere that could legally handle the safe destruction of R12. *Continued on page 14*

# Look where VASA is heading!!

## IF YOU'RE NOT UP WITH THE TECHNOLOGY, YOU ARE NOT IN THE GAME

**IN POINT form, here are VASA's achievements in the past year and goals for the next year, as presented by president Mark Mitchell at the Annual General Meeting in Melbourne in late August.**

Key issues for 1999/2000 include development of a national warranty program. A special team has been formed to continue the negotiations and get feedback from members. The VASA executive believes the national program has more benefits than negatives and agreed to set up the team to thoroughly investigate a proposal which has been placed before VASA.

More live training of technicians is seen as a major issue and this initiative is supported by the type of information imparted by the main speakers at the 1999 convention. The message was loud and clear "if you're not up with the technology, you are not in the game".

VASA is concerned about price cutting in insurance work and trying to stamp out this practise is the third major initiative for next year.

Sponsorship of VASA and fee review are priorities and so too is the changeover of all future VASA communication from paper to the new VASA website.  
[www.vasa.org.au](http://www.vasa.org.au)

### **Corporate Affairs INITIATIVES 98 / 99**

- Hot Air – 4 issues - printing sponsored by Elf Atochem
- Active contact with OEMS, media and government
- Steering committee for NOPP (National Ozone Production



- Program) and continued involvement on OPCC (Review of controls on HFC Refrigerants)
- Submissions and assistance to various organisations, RRA, AFCAM, United Nations and Commonwealth EPA
- Presentation at IMACA conference November 98
- 'Which Gas' brochure and policy documents distributed all through industry
- Member policy breaches dealt with in writing
- Joint participation with fellow trade organisations in a nationwide licencing scheme for all technicians
- Major response to 'toxic gas' scare, response given in radio and press in August 98
- Website project
- National warranty scheme project

### **GOALS**

- Website will takeover bulk of Corporate Affairs management
- Further corporate sponsorship
- More service and member accessories, eg. service labels, shirts, etc.
- EFTPOS proposal Westpac / VASA

### **Technical INITIATIVES 98 / 99**

- Maintained alliances with OEMS and refrigerant manufacturers and all aftermarket suppliers and manufacturers
- Reviewed Insurance Repair Procedure
  - Interchanged information with IMACA and MACS
  - Investigation of supporting technical documents for VASA workshops eg job cards, posters etc.
- Complete technical library under review for implementation through website.

### **GOALS**

- Minor re-draft of RTP for sale

overseas

- Promote website and CD's as means of distributing technical information
- Investigate viability of VASA Registered Service Centres

### **Training INITIATIVES 98 / 99**



- Major focus on RTP mainly due to it availability to all members
- RTP – Year 2 – increasing complexity and moving into diagnostics of systems from fundamentals handled in Year one
- RTP printing sponsored by Du Pont
- National questionnaire for training poorly received – new proposed team organisation needs to take greater role to promote
- Major face to face training focus was begun in New Zealand in June
- huge effort put in by New Zealand Committee – congratulations
- full program of courses offered and well received
- expanded specific training planned for New Zealand next year – possibly linked with convention
- prospective members invited to base training – a great idea – carefully scrutinised by NZ committee prior to invitation to attend

### **GOALS**

- Face to face training in the planning stages for Queensland – good response from Queensland state meeting
- Courses will only run if sufficient numbers attend to make them financially viable – nominally 12-14 persons
- Promote RTP as a 'prime' training medium

# . . . ARE YOU IN THE GAME?

## **Insurance INITIATIVES 98 / 99**

- VASA Service Directory and Insurance Repair Procedure sent to every motor insurer in Australia and New Zealand – Cost \$9,000
- A strong effort was undertaken to gain some corporate sponsorship from motor insurance companies. Nil result – very disappointing
- Continued promotion of mono-refrigerant policy
- Continued constant communication with motoring clubs and insurers regarding 134a pricing and VASA activities
- Daily technical help lines made available to loss assessors in Queensland and New South Wales – extensive use was made of this voluntary service

### **GOALS**

- Continue advice to motor insurers regarding 134a, regas and de-gas pricing – mainly GIO, NRMA and AAMI
- Re-structure level of future VASA technical help to motor insurers – nil financial help received to date
- Try to stop VASA members undercutting one another on 'recommended' prices

### **South Australia**

- VASA proposal given for RAA preferred repair recognition
- Several cylinders of 'virgin' R12 found contaminated with R22 and R134a
- Blends and hydrocarbons very active
- Downturn in new system installations
- Need more members for a stronger presence and image

### **Queensland**

- Downturn in new system installations
- Some VASA members undercutting one another on insurance work
- Some members considering promotion of 'annual service' not 'annual regassing'
- Some 100% airconditioning

specialists would like to see higher VASA fees to push out non genuine operators

- DIY 134a was available in parts stores

### **New South Wales**

- 'Toxic Gas' scare hit hard in Sydney in August '98
- Low attendance at meetings in Sydney, may consider some regional meetings
- Some members concerned with costs of getting to conventions
- Some concerns of incorrect information in '98 Service Directory. Website development has forced major review of member database. Members are now advised of onus to ensure their own info is up to date and correct.
- Downturn in new system installations

### **New Zealand**

- Hosting VASA 2000 Convention
- Excellent 98 / 99 season
- Currently 22 members with six under consideration under VASA entry guidelines
- Live training session completed in July with Grant Hand
- Blend refrigerants in wide use
- VASA must insist on compulsory equipment list (as per members manual) including refrigerant analysers

### **Victoria**

- Reduced temperatures in 98 / 99 resulted in fairly poor and short season
- Blend gases are widely used, slight drop in use of hydrocarbons
- Radiator shops are being viewed by insurers as 'experts' in cheap retrofits
- Equipment purchasing is continuing with gas analysers high on the list
- VASA members are being bypassed by insurers on the initial cheap \$95 retrofit and then 'used' later to fix the problem.

# CONNECTING!

**V**ASA is considering making an internet connection a necessary pre-requisite to becoming a member.

With the VASA website up and running, it is just a matter of time before all VASA business will be conducted on the website. It will also contain all technical information and every link required for proper operation of your business.

At last check, 33 members of VASA had applied for their passwords, giving them access to the specialised member pages.

However, we have 64 members' email addresses, which means about half of you have not bothered to get your passwords yet...what's holding you back?

All members on email should log in and get your passwords verified.

*Continued from page 12*

So some unscrupulous types might just vent it to atmosphere, thus harming the ozone layer and exposing themselves to legal penalties, but cutting the operating costs of their business.

The VASA member would fulfil their responsibilities, but be stuck with higher costs, not to mention the ever growing stock of rubbish refrigerant cluttering up the place.

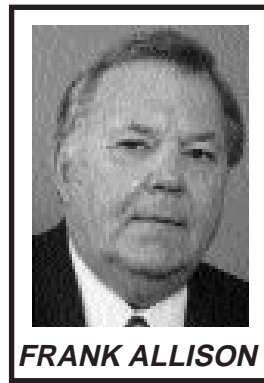
RRA covers the costs of recovering, reclaiming and destroying ozone depleting refrigerants. It's a non-profit body, set up by the whole industry, to make sure that the costs of good environmental practice and compliance with the law is shared by all the players, not just left up to the people at the end of the line.

Got any rubbish refrigerant?

Take it back to your wholesaler and he'll give you a credit of \$2.50 for it. No hassles about getting rid of a classified waste – RRA takes over your legal responsibility to see the material safely destroyed.

# Nostalgia . . .

*This is the third episode of the History of Mobile Airconditioning, delivered at the IMACA Convention and Trade Show in the US by IMACA executive director Frank Allison.*



**Success breeds competition, however, and in 1953 General Motors re-introduced factory-installed air conditioning as an option for their top-of-the-line models and other auto manufacturers quickly followed.**

The general motoring public, however, was not leaping at the chance to buy.

Air conditioning was considered an expensive option. At an average installed price of US\$450, factory air represented as much as 10 - 15% of the base-price of a top-of-the-line Chevrolet, for example.

So Detroit did what Detroit does when it wants to sell something, it poured millions of dollars into advertising!

Billboards and magazine ads promoted personal comfort and health benefits air conditioning could provide.

And it worked. Americans bought! Not only from the factory, but from the new car dealerships, who purchased their units from the aftermarket manufacturers.

Business boomed! And in time, the growing, affluent middle-class would create a brand new market for automotive air conditioning the retail outlet or service center.

But for now, the aftermarket faced serious competition from the auto manufacturers. By the mid-1950s, OEMs held a 22% share of A/C installations, a trend which would continue to accelerate.

With competition, innovations came thick and fast - from both sides of the fence. Engineers worked overtime to develop better systems and be the first to market them.

In 1954, General Motors intro-

duced the first A/C system to be installed completely under the hood on its '55 Model Chevrolets. And Nash was one of the first OEMs to use an electric clutch to disengage the compressor.

Studebaker introduced its first A/C, built by Novi, in 1955. The operator adjusted air temperature by altering the refrigerant flow with a modulator valve controlled from the dash-mounted A/C panel.

Pontiac Motor Division offered a "split-duct" design which allowed outside air to pass over the evaporator and giving the operator even more control of the air quality and temperature.

And the aftermarket introduced their first "under the dash" models, incorporating the evaporator, fans, and controls into one unit.

The smaller size of these under-dash units helped to expand the retail market into compacts and foreign cars and reduced installation time to less than an hour for some vehicles.

Nevertheless, the sale and installation of trunk-mounted systems would continue for several years.

The 1960s were, for the business side of the automotive air conditioning industry, what the 1950s were for engineering and system development. Both the aftermarket and the OEMs experienced phenomenal years.

For the aftermarket, success was measured, not in sales volume, but in units installed - the focus was on installations.

During the 1960s, competition from the automobile manufacturers was also on the rise. In 1965, GM announced the production of its 5 millionth A/C unit - 29% of

GM cars sold that year had factory air conditioning.

There was, virtually, an air conditioning explosion in the 60s.

There was a time when you could drive to virtually any major department store such as Sears/Roebuck, Montgomery Wards, or go to any of a number of automotive specialty stores or even service stations and have an airconditioner installed.

One of the selling points of the under-dash models was that you could "take it with you" when you traded cars. Now that sounds attractive, doesn't it?

However, while it was possible, it was rarely done. For one thing, the mounting bracket for the compressor would usually have to be replaced to fit the new car. The condenser might not fit and the receiver/drier would have to be replaced. Besides, you could usually get a little better trade in for a car with air conditioning.

There was even a unit called the "Comfy-Kit" advertised in 1965 as the first install-it-yourself auto airconditioner. It sold for US\$199 and included three cans of CFC-12. Auto air conditioning was hot.

*To be continued next issue:*

*In the last episode of this nostalgia series, Frank Allison looks at the rise and fall of the major aftermarket companies and reveals how the OEM's were doing quite nicely with this new technology.*

**VASA is proudly affiliated with: -**



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