



HOT AIR

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2009

The Automotive Air Conditioning, Electrical and Cooling Technicians of Australasia

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VASA Leadership changes

VASA returns to its roots - the retail workshop

The 2009 VASA Annual General Meeting in Sydney saw the most significant change in the Board of Directors in five years.

President since 2004, Mark Padwick, decided the time had come for new blood at the head of the organisation, and nominated as Vice-President, leaving the way clear for a new face at the top, Ian Stangroome, an Adelaide workshop owner and technician.

Mark Mitchell, VASA's foundation president for ten years, moved from the Vice-President's position to that of Director.

Mark reminded VASA members that everything VASA does revolves around the workshop at the coalface of the industry.

"The workshop is the reason for our being."



VASA foundation
president
Mark Mitchell

"We are a technical trade based association which was formed when we were fitting and installing air-conditioning," he said.

"What happens in the workplace dictates how we perform as an association.

"The workshop community got together in 1993 for two reasons. The first was to establish a communication process to deliver consistency of technical information to workshop owners.

"Up till then, the trade had no formal recognition or qualifications. Most of us doing air were self taught and vehicle air conditioning installation was 'a black art'.

"There was strong motivation from the workshop community to try and elevate the communication and training process," Mark recalls.

"The second reason was to establish a strong lobby to protect our industry and ensure that if mandatory controls were imposed, the interests of the workshop technician were considered.

"We could hear the distant drums from Canberra beating the message of a strong control mechanism on our industry with mandatory controls on recovery and phasing out of the refrigerant we were using.

"It seemed we were going to be dictated to in a harmful way if we didn't get together and have our say. That has not changed through the years," asserts Mark.

"When they brought down the phase - out of CFCs, the industry had to act responsibly and adopt a stewardship regime.

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Meet your new President - Ian Stangroome



Ian has built a successful business, Corjay Aire Pty Ltd in Adelaide, through hard work and training. He is VASA member #23, which makes him an association pioneer.

He put his hand up to join the Wire & Gas Committee to plan the 2010 event, and he plays a leading role with former VASA director Dave Jackson in the very active South Australian members' group.

His interests include German cars BMW and Mercedes and adding to his already substantial technical knowledge.

Ian did his apprenticeship at the Leigh Creek Coalfield and became a tradesman and shift leading hand at the open-cut coalmine.

He earned his qualification as electrical tradesman special class and in 1988 took on a partnership and technician role in Merc-Aire-Auto Electrical and Air Conditioning, which became Corjay Aire in 1997, under his sole ownership.



Ian Stangroome in the workshop with his team leader Harry Amanatidis

If you want a clean industry - just give us the facts

There are two questions which regularly crop up in conversations with VASA members - 'when are you going to get rid of the unlicensed backyarders, and the idiots using hydrocarbon refrigerants in air-con systems?'

VASA does its level best through the ARC and other avenues to achieve both of these noble goals but, because both issues are, to put it bluntly, 'under the table', or clandestine, it's extremely difficult for those with the power to act to do a great deal without real hard evidence.

Take unlicensed operators, who are predominantly those who choose to undertake repairs on vehicles charged with R134a, with total disregard for the need to capture and contain the refrigerant rather than 'letting it go'. It could also apply to those, who, with the help of unnamed friends, manage to get supplies of R134a so that they can continue their unauthorised trade.

The Australian Refrigeration Council's Chairman, VASA's own Mark Padwick, is imploring members not to be bashful about 'dobbing in' those they suspect are not doing the right thing.

But the right way to do it is through VASA. That way, VASA can ensure that it has enough evidence to pass on complaints to the audit chiefs in ARC.

However, as Mark Padwick says, "Just

phoning VASA and saying 'there's a guy down the road we think is doing a/c repairs without a licence' is not evidence.

"VASA will not divulge the informant, but it still needs some solid evidence or at least a firm suspicion that workshops are engaging in practices in defiance of the law," said Mark.

VASA will take complaints, but they must contain the name of the offending workshop, their address and phone number if possible, names of technicians if possible, and an explanation of why you suspect that they are venting refrigerant or carrying out unlicensed repairs.

Mark Padwick has assured members that the auditors will act on these complaints.

The same goes for workshops suspected of using hydrocarbons.

In Queensland, where the laws prohibiting the use of this dangerous refrigerant in vehicles are very clear, the Queensland Gas Examiner says his auditors will act on complaints received from VASA, as long as they contain the same kind of detail.

In a recent meeting with VASA, the Gas Examiner said the government had the power to go to workshops or properties where they suspected hydrocarbon was being used in equipment for which it was not designed, and undertake gas analysis which could lead to prosecution or recall of the equipment.

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VASA has played a major part in this through sister organisations like Refrigerants Australia and Refrigerant Reclaim Australia.

"VASA then had to ward off any dramatic threat of phase-out or control on HFCs by negotiating the voluntary licencing system through the Australian Refrigeration Council. We are now faced with the threat of a carbon price being implemented to cover synthetics which is an ongoing negotiation with the government right now," Mark added.

"It is only as a group that we can possibly be taken seriously by government and other industries."

"We realised that HFCs would be phased out over time. Without an appropriate product stewardship scheme and certification of technicians, the Australian Government might well have followed the European line and brought down a dramatic control or phase-out regime on HFCs much quicker than we are now facing in a more measured way.

"We supported the certification of technicians so that the industry would have the time and resources to manage its affairs," Mark said.

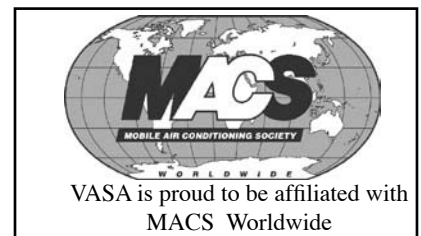
"You could argue that the ARC we have today was not the one we had originally planned. However, it is considerably better than having nothing at all.

"ARC by its very existence is achieving many of the things that needed to be done, including elevating the status of technicians to a uniform level and bringing some consistency and responsible handling practices to the way refrigerants are sold, supplied and installed in modern vehicles.

"So you can see that the workshop is in reality the root of everything we do.

"Making this point is not to dilute the work of previous presidents or board members. All who have served have brought valuable technical skills to the table at a time when they were really needed.

"Ian Stangroome will bring a pure workshop agenda to the table, and that is indeed timely," Mark added.



THE NEW VASA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ian Stangroome
President



- Automotive Electrician Trade Certificate
- Electrical Fitter/Mechanic Trade Certificate
- Certificate IV Automotive Business Management
- Industrial Electronics 1 and 2
- Refrigerant Handling Licence
- Electrical Contractors Licence
- Director - Corjay Aire Pty Ltd
- Attended no fewer than 25 courses through Bosch, Repco, VASA and TAFE
- Pioneer member of VASA
- Member Inner West Business Enterprise Centre
- Member Institute of Automotive Mechanical Engineers
- RAA Approved Repairer Auto Electrical & Air Conditioning Categories
- Bosch Service Dealer
- Business Enterprise Centre



Mark Padwick
Vice-President

- Degree – Mechanical Engineering
- Degree - MBA
- VASA Board member for 10 years, 14 years as member
- General Manager of Sanden Australia for six years
- Chairman of Australian Refrigeration Council for two years

Jeff Smit
Treasurer/Secretary



- Certificate III – Mechanical & Auto Electrical
- VASA Board member for two years
- 11 years as member of VASA
- Director of On The Road Automotive Pty Ltd since 1989
- Director of The Automotive Technician Pty Ltd since 2008
- Director of Manly Warringah Soccer Club Ltd since 2008
- Vice President of Manly Warringah Football Association since 2005
- Registrar of St. Augustines Football Club from 2001-2008
- Treasurer/Secretary of Australian Association of Auto Electricians from 1998-2008

Mark Mitchell
Director



- Diploma - Automotive Management
- Certificate IV – Automotive Technical
- VASA Board member for 16 years
- 16 years as a member of VASA
- Director of MTAQ for two years
- Director of SCA Australia Pty Ltd for 20 years
- Director of Refrigerant Reclaim Australia for six years
- Chairman of Supercool Pty Ltd for 30 years.

Barry Rogers
Director



- Diploma - Accounting
- VASA Board member for 10 years
- 12 years as member of VASA
- Director of Auckland Auto Air for 12 years

Deyan Barrie
Director



- Certificate III Aircraft Electrical Mechanic & Electrical
- Fitter (RAAF Trained 1971-1977)
- Certificate II Mobile Automotive Air Conditioning
- VASA Board member for two years
- 10 years as VASA member
- Owner/Operator of Moruya Auto Electrics & Shoreline Auto Electrics for four years
- Director of Barrie Auto Electrics Pty Ltd since 1983
- Director of The Automotive Technician since 2008
- Chairman & Councillor of Motor Traders Association NSW since 2000
- President of Australian Association of Auto Electricians from 1998-2008

Tim Grimes
Director



- Bachelor of Applied Science (IT)
- Associate Diploma of Business (Marketing)
- VASA Board member for one year
- 14 years as a member of VASA
- Director of Hangan Automotive Pty Ltd from 2000-2004
- Director of Mastcal Pty Ltd since 1994
- Director in charge of marketing for VASA and Wire & Gas Convention.

The regular features of Hot Air will return with the next issue.

In the meantime, members are encouraged to use the new VASA website.

More information to help members in their daily business is loaded on the site regularly, so you should visit often.

Members can gain access to the restricted members-only area of the website by inserting your member number and your password which is the first four letters of your suburb, in lower case. This must match the address you gave in your membership application.



VASA Annual Report to members

Covering the year 1 April 2008 to 30 March 2009

Delivered at the Annual General Meeting in Sydney, 30 May 2009

MEMBER SERVICES

The VASA Board devoted a great deal of time in the past year to looking at new ways to encourage members and to express the benefits of being a member.

Over the years the benefits of membership are occasionally challenged, but in the majority of cases, the challenges come from people who expect everything but give nothing.

Members are always reminded that membership of any organisation is a two-way street and often it's as simple as 'what you sow, so shall you reap'.

Many members do treat their involvement very seriously and perhaps the best current example of this is the promotional work being done in South Australia by the members in that state as well as some from Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The South Australian model of regional cooperation and pooled resources for active promotion of VASA workshops is a perfect example of making membership of a professional network work to the full advantage of the members.

The board is keen to replicate this model in other states as a means of keeping the members interested in their organisation and providing a platform for technical networking which can greatly assist individual members. Steps taken by the Board in the past year to address some of these issues are as follows:

- VASA is no longer an acronym but a brand name, with the description 'Automotive Air-conditioning, Electrical and Cooling Technicians of Australasia'

used with the simplified logo to denote VASA's wider membership base which includes auto electricians and cooling technicians as well as air-conditioning technicians.

Future membership drives will concentrate on both workshop operators and individual technicians, with a new fee structure for technicians to encourage their participation. Individual technicians, provided they are employees of a workshop, are able to join for a much lower fee but with no voting rights and other limitations.

This is seen as a means of introducing technicians who may not necessarily work in a VASA member workshop into the network and providing them with the membership discounts to attend future Wire & Gas conventions.

Thanks to the efforts of Director Tim Grimes, the first major incentive program for new members and existing members began with the new financial year. That was an incentive offer for existing members to rejoin and for new members to consider joining. At the time of writing this report approximately 20 new members had joined from a mail out of some 7000 membership enticement brochures, thanks to the co-operation of wholesaler members.

With the advent of the independent TaT (The Automotive Technician) project, members are offered free magazines and a problem solving service. This replaces the old VASA problem solving

service which was not reliable and too time consuming for volunteer VASA members. This can only work under a commercial arrangement, which TaT is providing to VASA free of charge.

Despite the signing up of new members VASA continues to suffer from an attrition rate which is symptomatic of our times but also represents a challenge to the incoming board to consider new ways of providing member benefits, building on the marketing program introduced by Tim Grimes, and ensuring that members are able to clearly see the value of being a member.

The membership snapshot (in the chart below) is all too typical of the renewal period, where the hard core membership can always be counted on to renew on time but far too many others procrastinate on their membership and many renewals come in over a six-month period.

This does not help proper management of the Association and strictly speaking those members who have not renewed within two months of the start of the financial year on 1 April face membership cancellation. The board has been reluctant to do this in past years but the incoming board may need to consider how to approach this problem.

In addition to the above, there are another 46 previously unfinancial service centres which have received renewal notices, in the hope that some

may reconsider and rejoin.

Of these, seven have rejoined, five said they would not rejoin and the remaining 34 have not yet responded. They will be followed up by the treasurer in the next month.

VASA ADMINISTRATION

Significant changes have occurred in the handling of VASA financials and membership management over the past 12 months. Following the resignation of long time secretary/treasurer John Blanchard prior to the 2008 annual general meeting, the board welcomed Tim Grimes to take John's place.

In the meantime, VASA had reached an agreement with a sister organisation AIRAH, based in Melbourne, to take on the back office chores and membership management which in the previous 10 years or more had been handled at Ken Newton's office in Southport.

Ken had advised the board early in 2007 that he would like the back office work to be taken from his office, as part of a scale down of his activities.

The transition of the back office and the associated records from VASA to AIRAH did not run smoothly for a number of reasons, and it was subsequently agreed that there were shortcomings on both sides which then led to the cancellation of the agreement in February this year.

Type of membership	Number renewed 2009-2010	Comments
Corporate	5	3 members to renew
Manufacturers	8	5 members to renew
National Wholesalers	5	3 members to renew
State Wholesalers	8	1 member to renew
Service Centres	170	44 members to renew 4 members confirmed they will not renew
Total current members	196	



VASA Annual Report to members

Both sides reached an amicable settlement which saw a refund of approximately \$8000 of fees which VASA had paid to AIRAH.

The board had other reasons to consider change because when the economic crisis began to bite last October it realised that it would have to cut costs to keep the association running efficiently.

Considering that Tim Grimes was playing a more important role in helping to market VASA to members and prospective members, director Jeff Smit volunteered to take on the secretary/treasurer role with the help of his very experienced bookkeeper wife Wendy Smit.

Between them, they pulled together the financial reports to audit standard at the end of the year and all records have been successfully loaded into MYOB.

This arrangement now seems to be working efficiently and is costing VASA considerably less than it was paying previously.

Members will see a great improvement in the way their memberships are managed in future.

Tim Grimes in the meantime has spearheaded a major promotion campaign for VASA which also includes the introduction of a brand new website to replace the original site which was out of date after a decade of use.

Ken Newton has a new and scaled back contract to provide VASA with corporate relations services, writing of articles, keeping and acting on board and AGM minutes and assisting in the preparation of all printed material. His office still handles routine calls from members and prospective members.

GENERAL PROMOTION AND AFFILIATIONS

Members of the board and the CEO spend a great deal of time during the year maintaining a strong presence at top government level and solid relationships with kindred organisations in Australia and overseas.

VASA continues to enjoy a strong affiliation with MACS Worldwide, our equivalent, although a much larger organisation, in America.

MACS allows VASA members access through our website to their regular technical bulletins, which normally have to be purchased.

Board members play important roles on the Australian Refrigeration Council, where President Mark Padwick has been re-elected as chairman, Vice-President Mark Mitchell serves on the Board of Refrigerant Reclaim Australia and is a member of Refrigerants Australia.

CEO Ken Newton maintains a strong profile for the association through writing regular articles and columns in HVAC & R in Australia and MACS Action in America, as well as writing and editing the bimonthly newsletter Hot Air which goes not only to members but to key people in the industry.

The board agreed to take part and co-sponsor the first national CoolWorld Awards for innovation in ecologically sustainable air conditioning and refrigeration, conducted by the magazine CCN during 2008.

VASA judged and nominated two finalists. VASA member Steven Tiniakos, proprietor of Sydney-based Celsius Air Conditioning and Refrigeration was named Auto Air-conditioning Young Technician of the year (first pic), and runner up was Steven Manassa of Kar Air Pty Ltd at Ferntree Gully (second pic).



The awards sponsorship cost VASA nothing except for a small administration cost, because its sponsorship was met by VASA manufacturer members.

However, the awards benefits were dubious and automotive was overshadowed by the stationary refrigerant sector. It is doubtful if VASA would be involved again in such an award.

REFRIGERANTS

The biggest single technical issue reported to members during the year was the race by synthetic refrigerant manufacturers to meet the European Union's deadline which effectively bans the use of high global warming refrigerants such as R134a in all vehicles in Europe after 2011.

Whereas R134a has a global warming potential (GWP) of 1,430, the new refrigerant which has now been adopted by all car makers (except some in Germany who are still favouring CO₂), HFO-1234yf, has a GWP of only four.

VASA members are repeatedly warned, however, that they will need to prepare for the management of three different refrigerants for some time into the future, with CO₂ systems perhaps coming from some European made cars, another called R152a from American car makers, and in Australasia, it is likely that R134a will be around for some time before stocks of HFO-1234yf are available.

HFO-1234yf is being promoted as a straight drop-in for all R134a systems.

AUSTRALIAN REFRIGERATION COUNCIL

VASA, in particular Mark Mitchell, was a pioneer member of the board of this council, which was appointed by the Commonwealth government to manage the new licensing and authorisation of technicians and workshops under the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act.

VASA President Mark Padwick was elected Chairman of the ARC in 2007 and re-elected in 2008 and is its current Chairman.

The ARC is evolving as a forward focused, strategic, modern organisation that aims to make a real positive difference. A new vision, mission and values have been defined and the ARC board has put in place a new roadmap for the future.

The Strategic Plan recognises that the way forward will require quality partnerships with industry, government, individual licence and business authorisation holders and other key stakeholders.

The fluorocarbon refrigerant licensing scheme is a very important end use control in the reduction of global warming, putting ARC at the forefront of environmental best practice. It has a very real impact on minimising avoidable emissions into the atmosphere of ozone depleting and synthetic greenhouse gases used as refrigerant.

During 2008-09 the total number of individual Refrigerant Handling Licences increased 6.07% and business authorisations increased 8.13% over the previous year. This is on top of the previous year's increases of 21.43% and 11.36%.

The following charts clearly show the status of ARC. In the automotive sector, the trend is also upward with the number of licences increasing 7.17% and business authorisations increasing 4.24%. This is on top of an increase of 25.91% and 24.05% in the previous year.



VASA Annual Report to members

nights complemented the extensive communications campaign.

ARC has listened to industry and as a result it has ensured the regulations are relevant and provide the industry with the appropriate tools to minimise emissions.

An example of this is the risk assessment. It was clear that the requirements were not reflective of industry best practice so the requirements were changed to allow workshops to reflect what is actually done in their environment.

ARC also pushed for the use of authorisation numbers on advertising material. This helps consumers identify the repairers that are doing the right thing and it will also assist ARC auditors identify the so called 'back yarders'. ARC will continue to listen to industry and provide as much support as possible to ensure all repairers are working towards a common goal.

Minimum Energy Performance Standards

The ARC successfully bid for the Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) and energy labelling laws compliance scheme contract, extending its strategic alliances to directly include manufacturers and retailers.

The Future

With the focus on climate change, it is an exciting time for the refrigeration and air conditioning industry, never more so than in the automotive sector, which continues to feel the brunt of the global financial crisis.

With increasing growth in the energy sector, increased ownership of heating and cooling equipment together with the continued trend to increased car usage, improvements in storage, handling and sales of potential

ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases and the equipment which contains them is critical.

WIRE & GAS CONVENTION

The 2008 convention held at the Gold Coast Convention Centre was voted one of the most successful yet, with an attendance of 300 delegates and trade show personnel.

Further improvements will be made in time for the 2010 convention which will be held at the Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast on the June long weekend from 11 - 14 June.

The committee introduced some major incentives to encourage participation, including half price for second and subsequent technicians from the same workshop and free registration for apprentice employees of registered conventioners.

A very active committee has been re-formed for the 2010 convention and the planning is well advanced.

This convention is without doubt one of the association's main activities on behalf of its members and is seen by the board as a significant benefit of membership.

It is the only convention of its kind dedicated to the vehicle air conditioning and electrical industries. It is well supported by wholesalers and manufacturers and is a shop window of substantial value to members. The training component, which has grown considerably in recent years, will be even bigger and occupy more convention time in 2010.

Those who regularly attend are glowing in their support of the convention and the training but it will need an extra sales effort on behalf of all members if VASA is to achieve the 2010 target of 500 delegates.

REFRIGERANT RECLAIM AUSTRALIA

VASA is a member of Refrigerant Reclaim Australia and the Vice-President Mark Mitchell sits on the board.

Returns of refrigerants and their destruction are increasing but RRA is concerned about the potential rising costs of refrigerant destruction which would under normal circumstances lead to a rise in levies.

However the RRA board does not wish to pursue a rise in levies and is looking at the possibility of owning its own destruction facility and some offshore destruction facilities are also being tested for cost reasons.

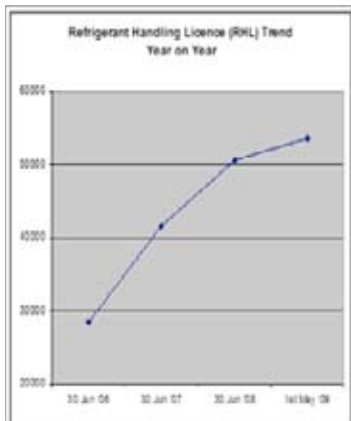
RRA management plays a major consultative role to government on the implications of carbon permits or carbon tax on the supply chain of refrigerants including their recovery and destruction leading to the ultimate reduction of emissions.

In fact RRA is considered by the government as a major contributor to debates on practical refrigerant management, and in future modelling of handling refrigerants.

Up till 31 March 2009, refrigerants returned to RRA for destruction amounted to 382 tonnes and if the current rate of return continues, by the end of June, the total for the year will be close to 546 tonnes.

RRA has destroyed a total of 2,869 tonnes of refrigerant since it began this service in 2000 in an environmentally responsible manner.

In the financial year under review, to the end of March 2009, it will have destroyed 503 tonnes, compared with 415 tonnes for the same period in the previous year.



An essential element of the licensing scheme is the audit and sanction process. The ARC conducted approximately six thousand audits on businesses to determine compliance over the last twelve months. It has also conducted close to 2000 drive-by audits.

Communications and Industry Support

In the past year the ARC has 'mainstreamed' the licensing scheme, positioning it as front-of-mind for consumers through nationwide radio adverts, building the credibility of licence and authorisation holders.

A focus has been to encourage consumers to 'look for the ARCTick', and the provision of point of sale material to directly support the automotive industry.

Attendance at both stationary and automotive trade exhibitions, quarterly editions of Cool Change and representation at industry organisation information



VASA Annual Report to members

Current stockpile of refrigerants awaiting destruction amounts to 107 tonnes.

CPRS (Carbon pollution reduction scheme)

VASA representatives have attended top-level government briefing sessions and liaised on a regular basis with kindred organisations over the past 12 months while the Commonwealth government attempted to sell its CPRS (Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme) to industry.

There are serious implications, including cost blow-outs for R134a should the government's model become law. However, at the time of preparation of this report not only was the government's move delayed for another year but serious amendments were being forced on the government by other parties before it has any chance of passing into legislation.

There is, however, another glimmer of hope that auto refrigerants may be exempted from the scheme (See RA report).

VASA played its role by lodging detailed objections to the government in response to their first White Paper but the response received to that objection at the time was far from positive.

Members will be kept informed through the pages of Hot Air on the progress of the industry moves to seek the exemption for R134a.

REFRIGERANTS AUSTRALIA

VASA is a member of Refrigerants Australia, and maintains a very close liaison with this important industry body.

The significant activity of RA in the past year has been its contribution to the CPRS debate.

It submitted a position paper to the Commonwealth government, which suggested strongly that synthetic greenhouse gases be left out of the CPRS.

It was indicated to the government that the industry was more than capable of phasing out harmful greenhouse gases. Because of the high carbon price which was likely to see R134a prices rise to \$100 per kilogram or more, the government was warned that this would cause major upheavals within the industry.

The industry in Australia has an excellent track record of high-level interface with the government and considering the industry's record in phasing out CFCs the industry could confidently advise the government that the same could apply to HCFCs.

Refrigerant Australia took the view that the original intent of carbon trading schemes was to aim at the smokestacks and exhaust pipes of the world, not individual consumable products.

Senator Penny Wong and the Department of Climate Change seemed intent on leaving refrigerant gases in the CPRS until recently.

A proposal from the Pacific Island states to the Montréal protocol signatories has called for a re-convening to consider the phase-out of HFCs under a modified Montreal protocol. This proposal has surprisingly received support from the US EPA and at the time of writing this report, appears to be achieving some credibility within the global environmental community.

If this occurs Refrigerants Australia expects this will create a clear pathway to have HFCs set aside from the CPRS and have these refrigerants dealt with in a similar fashion to the phase-out of CFSs.

VASA will be watching this issue very closely and reporting to members regularly.

HISTORY PROJECT

With the support of MACS Worldwide in America, VASA Vice-President Mark Mitchell has launched an Australia and New Zealand automotive air-conditioning history project.

The aim is to present the Australian archives with a full history of vehicle air conditioning.

Members are asked to participate by sending in details of the types of work and installations they performed in their workshops during the days when kits were used to install air conditioning in most vehicles.

A founder of VASA, Ralph Cadman, has already started the ball rolling with a significant history of some of the major wholesale and retail players in the development of aftermarket air conditioning in this country.

SPONSORSHIP PROJECTS

Two air conditioning simulators, funded through Refrigerants Australia sponsorship, made their debut at the Wire & Gas convention, used for Cert II competency assessments.

A DVD project, also funded by Refrigerants Australia, was conceived by Grant Hand and VASA, with production help from Newtons, delivered a complete DVD of system service to remote technicians in Australia and New Zealand. The funding covered the first 1000 DVDs plus workbook, and these are on the market and are selling well. Grant Hand's company was provided with 700 of the DVDs and VASA received the remainder for sale to members at the discounted rate of \$10 below retail. VASA retains \$10 from every sale.

CODE OF PRACTICE

After several years of effort, the Code of Practice Automotive was finally adopted by government.

The original input came from VASA and MTAA which were both acknowledged by the government.

VASA is promoting an understanding of the finer points of the Code, by running a series of articles in the Hot Air newsletter.

FLAMMABLES

The infiltration of flammable refrigerants into rural areas of Australia is causing some concern to VASA members who service agricultural machinery.

VASA continues to warn its members not to encourage flammable use and to educate their customers on the dangers of using this unauthorised refrigerant in any kind of vehicle.

Of all Australian states, Queensland presents probably the most understandable position by making the use of flammable refrigerants illegal in any system for which they are not designed. The government, through the Queensland Gas Examiner, is active in issuing safety alerts and the current situation in Queensland is that if any technician discovers a hydrocarbon in any vehicle a/c system, they are required by law to report to the government and the vehicle must be recalled from service.

VASA recently arranged meetings with the Queensland Gas Examiner where an agreement was reached to mount a joint promotion campaign through rural media and agricultural insurance companies and to warn all farmers of the dangers of using this refrigerant.

Other measures are being discussed with a view to extending this kind of

VASA Annual Report to members

promotion to other states where legislation does exist under occupational health and safety laws which should effectively ban the use of hydrocarbon in vehicle a/c systems.

VASA seeks the assistance of members to report known cases of use of flammable refrigerants with as much detail as possible.

IN CLOSING

I would like to thank Jeff and Wendy Smit for the countless hours they have put into the VASA financials in the past three months, to provide the members with a clear and concise picture of VASA's financial position.

On a personal note, after being the President of the association for five years the time has come for me to move aside to let some new blood into the organisation.

I have enjoyed the time as President and hope that I have added value. To my fellow directors I say thanks for your total commitment and dedication and constant support.

I am sure your new President will take on the challenges and turn them into successes. As a VASA director I will continue to represent the association and provide the new President with the necessary support to take our association forward.

Mark Padwick President

The cream of the industry are in this room

"Isn't it strange that the technicians who really needed to attend this training aren't here," remarked VASA director Mark Mitchell in his welcome to members on the AGM training day in Sydney.

"The people in this room are the cream of the industry. These are the faces we see at every training session, while so many others wonder why they can't keep up with technology, or can't attract enough clients," he added.

Jeff Smit, chief trainer for The Automotive Technician, provided a solid three-hour training session on diagnostics and case studies, and all agreed it was a top show.

At the lunch break and

after the VASA Annual General Meeting, supporting trade show exhibitors were kept busy with a small but quality audience of technicians from four states.

"New South Wales has always been a difficult audience to attract, but we prefer to think that it's more a city traffic and distance thing than lack of enthusiasm for training," said VASA CEO Ken Newton.



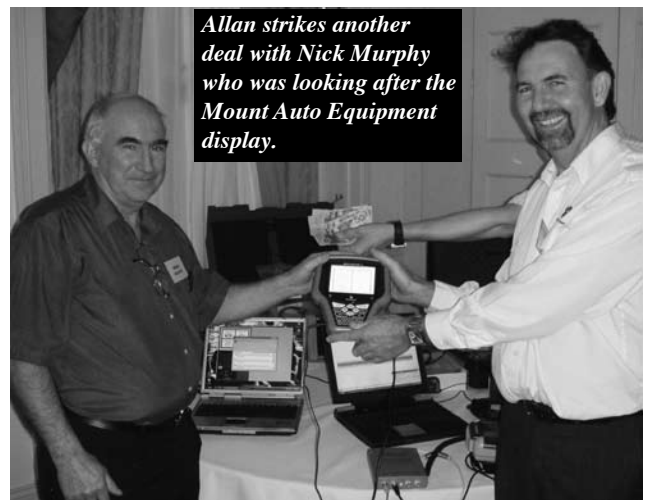
Arie Oosterveen (Islington NSW) and Warren Taylor (Gold Coast) enjoy a post-training beer.



The TaT training session, conducted by Jeff Smit (left) was well received.



Allan Michell from Sydney strikes a deal with exhibitor Graham Hobbs of Envirotronics.



Allan strikes another deal with Nick Murphy who was looking after the Mount Auto Equipment display.



George Box from Wangaratta, Victoria (left) and Mark Mitchell (Gold Coast) discuss equipment with Redarc's Mike Bale.



Steve Kay (Orange NSW), discusses equipment with CoolDrive Distribution's Frank Vella while Gerald Van Der Hout from CoolDrive and Jeff Smit check the CoolDrive catalogue.