



HOT AIR

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2010

The Automotive Air Conditioning, Electrical and Cooling Technicians of Australasia

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VASA TO MAKE BIG CHANGES TO CONVENTION AND TRAINING

Radical changes to VASA's Wire & Gas Convention formula could be made at a special meeting of the organising committee in October.

The big Wire & Gas event, with ten trainers, trade show, gala dinner, cocktail party and golf tournament held at the Gold Coast's Royal Pines Resort in June 2010, is likely to be the last of its kind. A combination of rising costs and belt tightening across the industry has made this mega event no longer financially feasible. Wire & Gas 2010 made the first financial loss in the convention's long history.

Although not yet confirmed, the current thinking is to abandon one-day regional training events, as forecast during the recent Wire & Gas Convention, in favour of a return to annual conventions, with nothing but training on offer, moving from city to city.

The conventions would be held every Queen's Birthday long weekend in June, with the favoured venue for 2011 being Melbourne (Saturday and Sunday 11 and 12 June).

While there is no question that the delegates at this year's Wire & Gas Convention on the Gold Coast were stoked with the training, the trade show and the socialising, the unexpected shortfall in delegates, as well as lower sponsorship offerings, and a dramatic drop in registrations from the ranks of exhibitors resulted in a negative financial result.

The convention, originally called the VASA Convention, was held annually from 1993 to 2002 and after merging with the Australian Association of Automotive Electricians, it was held every two years after 2002.

In the post mortem on the 2010 convention, the committee realised that the convention had been supported all those years by just under 200 dedicated VASA members. The expected increase in new delegates has been small, despite the huge promotional effort and financial incentives that were put into play for the last three conventions.

Some of the leading exhibitors have also indicated that they could no longer justify the expense and effort of 'preaching to the converted'.

A general tightening of workshop and household budgets, symptomatic of the global economic crisis, may also have contributed to the lack of widespread involvement in the last convention.

The committee, headed by VASA's founding president Mark Mitchell, has agreed that the convention should revert to an annual hard core training event, with no frills.

The committee is gathering costs and seeking new contracts with four to six top trainers and will meet this month to make the final decision on the future of Wire & Gas.

New Zealand directorship changes hands

Pioneer New Zealand director of VASA, Barry Rogers has resigned from the board and, with the approval of his fellow directors, will hand over to long time New Zealand member, Catherine Tocker, of CoolCar Air-Conditioning Centre, Hamilton.

At the Annual General Meeting in June, Barry and all sitting board members were elected unopposed.

However, Barry had indicated to the board that he wished to make room for a replacement New Zealand director.

Catherine had submitted a nomination form for a directorship, but it came in too late for consideration at the AGM.

Barry happily stood down to allow Catherine to take on the role and the board, at its first meeting following the AGM, considered it was appropriate for Catherine to be offered the position.



VASA director, Mark Mitchell, who was president when the first approaches were made to VASA to widen its membership to include New Zealand workshop operators, paid tribute to the early organising work done by Barry Rogers.

"It was Barry who lobbied the board to expand its work to New Zealand, and it was Barry who gathered the first group of members together.

As a result, we have shared many good and productive times with a hard core New Zealand membership, and they have consistently attended our conventions in force.

"And it would be hard to forget the fantastic convention held in Auckland in 2000, pulled together by Barry and a hard working group of fellow VASA members," said Mark.

Catherine will be invited to the next meeting of the VASA board, due in November.

President says many members will be disappointed

VASA president Ian Stangroome says many long-term members will be disappointed that the popular format for Wire & Gas is likely to be wound back.

“For all those who do attend the two-yearly conventions, there can be no doubt that they receive great value from the events,” Ian said.

“Unfortunately, they are the same core group of VASA members each time. They see the value and that’s why they keep coming back.

“They are the same people who are going to be most disappointed to see our format change.

“The feedback I received personally from the members, after the June Wire & Gas Convention, was nothing but extremely positive.

“The financial reality is that 200 registrations is not enough to cover the costs of such an event.

“The VASA Board and Convention Committee put a lot of effort into organising the convention to provide the best possible value to the members but we need to be providing an event to attract the majority of the membership and many new non-member delegates as well.

“We are, therefore, forced into making the tough decisions and re-thinking the format of the convention, first to keep the cost realistic and affordable for members and the organisation, and second to attract more of the membership to these events,” Ian added.

VASA always on the lookout for those prepared to give something back to their industry

The VASA directors have been concerned for some time that there seems so little interest in leadership roles in the organisation.

Fortunately for VASA it has always had a strong board of directors.

While some of the original directors have left the industry, those who remain have been involved for many years in the administration and policy setting of both VASA and the former Australian Association of Auto Electricians.

As many of the original directors become more involved in the growth of their own businesses, the time they can devote voluntarily to an industry organisation becomes harder to find.

The board is trying to encourage younger technicians to take an interest in the management of the organisation.

As part of that process, the board wanted it known that members who serve in any formal capacity either on the board or on the Wire & Gas convention committee or any other committee which might be formed from time to time, will not be out of pocket.

There is provision for reimbursement of legitimate expenses such as air travel, accommodation and taxi hire to get to meetings.

VASA expects that volunteers will give their time and expertise free to their organisation, but they should not have to fund their travel to carry out meeting duties.

SERVING CAN BE A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR A YOUNG VASA MEMBER

The VASA board of directors meets a minimum of four times every year, with email meetings in between.

The Wire & Gas committee meets more regularly, especially in the nine months prior to the convention. Other committees which might be formed for specific purposes will meet only when required.

Director’s opinions are sought on a range of questions from industry bodies and, while most of these routine duties are handled by the secretariat and CEO, some issues are referred to directors for comment.

There are opportunities for directors to attend government briefings and meetings of other key bodies in the industry, and this can be an informative and interesting experience.

While directors have a legal obligation to avoid using their position for commercial gain, working for an association such as VASA can be an educational experience for new directors or committee members.

The exposure to industry leaders and to various points of view can help to develop a better business sense and generally give those who serve a wider vision of their industry.

Members are encouraged to consider putting their names forward for management roles in VASA. They can do that by emailing secretary@vasa.org.au, or they can phone the president or any of the sitting board members to discuss the role of a director in more detail.

The rules of the company require that a form is lodged with the secretary, on which the member is nominated and seconded by two members of the company. This form can be lodged at any time.

GM takes the plunge on new refrigerant

Below: VASA President Ian Stangroome officially opens Wire & Gas 2010.

General Motors has become the first car maker in America to confirm the switch from R134a to the new HFO-1234yf in its new vehicles from 2013

In Europe, R134a must disappear from new models by 2011, but GM is the first US carmaker to announce replacement plans.

One of the big two companies behind the development of the new refrigerant, Honeywell, claims that, on average, R134a has an atmospheric life of more than 13 years, giving it a global warming potential of 1,430.

By comparison, the new refrigerant stays in the atmosphere for just 11 days and has a global warming potential of only 4.

Honeywell has formed a joint venture with DuPont to build the first production plant for 1234yf in Zhonghao, China, which will start supplying gas from late 2011.



Meet VASA's new New Zealand director

Catherine Tocker's professional life has focused on diagnostics, first in the health industry, and then in the vehicle air conditioning sector.

She came from a farming community near Hamilton to work as a medical laboratory assistant and later studied for four years for her national diploma in medical laboratory science.

Husband Rodney Smith had an engineering and refrigeration background and worked at CoolCar Air-Conditioning and The Auto Air Centres with New Zealand air conditioning pioneers including Allan Beecham, Richard Cooper, Barry Rogers, Ellis McGregor, Quim Silva, Rob McLaren, Dave Harwood, Chris Kitson and Allan Johnson.



Catherine provided a good summary of New Zealand industry issues at the VASA AGM on the Gold Coast in June.

responsibility for the tuberculosis laboratory and a nine months secondment as operations manager for microbiology which turned into a permanent role. "The last role was extremely

many cars that get us scratching our heads but it's great to have like-minded individuals to troubleshoot with.

Our business is involved in the high end of the air conditioning market.

"We voluntarily apply a 'no loss' practice for the handling of R134a and (despite the fact that New Zealand has yet to enact environmental laws similar to Australia's) we do not offer R134a re-gassing.

"Despite an explosion in the number of businesses doing their own air conditioning, we've remained solely air conditioning and heating specialists. Lately we are seeing franchise dealers swing back towards using our services as later model air conditioning systems are creating headaches they can't unravel," said Catherine.

CoolCar Hamilton has won the 2009 and 2010 Motor Trade Association "People's Choice Award" for automotive air conditioning repairers in their region.

"I look forward to my future involvement with VASA and hope to learn and contribute meaningfully. I have attended Wire & Gas in Australia twice and the festivities in Auckland when VASA came to town in 2000.

"I have a strong interest in the sustainable and profitable use of refrigerant for passenger safety and comfort and I am very interested in the stewardship of any new refrigerant into New Zealand.

"I am a strong proponent of best practice. I hope that my involvement in VASA may also benefit New Zealand as it looks towards the future.

"I pledge to apply my quality control background to learning the lessons of others and the past," Catherine added.

New Zealand moves to clean up its act on refrigerants

Since early 2007, VASA has provided government authorities in Wellington with information on Australia's licensing scheme and the impact of some aspects of the scheme on the vehicle repair industry.

In some respects, New Zealand has lagged behind other countries in addressing the atmospheric damage caused by synthetic greenhouse gases.

Right now, there are no regulations governing NZ technicians working on vehicle air conditioning.

Professional technicians have traditionally followed codes of practice issued by VASA or the MTA.

However, draft regulations are going through the consultation process covering handling of refrigerant and it is proposed they become law early in 2011.

Information on these regulations is available on the Climate Change Office website, www.climatechange.govt.nz

A cursory examination of the proposed legislation seems to indicate that the NZ authorities will not go as far as Australia has gone with licensing and banning accidental or deliberate release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The emphasis on the NZ moves is the establishment of a modified emissions trading scheme, but the government website says this will not directly involve the majority of New Zealand's small and medium sized businesses and does not require most businesses to report on their emissions.

People who import synthetic greenhouse gases either in bulk or contained within products or appliances can start reporting their importing or exporting activities voluntarily from 1 January 2011. They will be required to report the amount of synthetic greenhouse gases they import from 1 January 2012.



Rodney and Catherine opened their own air conditioning business in Hamilton in 1995. Rodney worked by himself almost day and night the first summer. Catherine stayed at her job for a time, commuting to Hamilton at weekends by motorbike.

"We'd meet up on Friday nights at the business and I'd do the statements, pay the bills and in the process I learned a great deal about air conditioning," recalls Catherine.

She went on to take up senior roles at Waikato Hospital in Hamilton, including

challenging but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

"During that time I moonlighted at CoolCar and left the hospital in 2002 to have our first child. Since then, I've worked at CoolCar full time.

"Business went from strength to strength from the moment we opened and we moved to larger premises in 1999. Ours is now one of five independently owned specialist automotive air-conditioning and heating workshops using the CoolCar brand within the Auckland and Waikato regions. There are not

By now, all VASA members should have placed their new A3 size decals on their business premises or their vehicles to show they are proud members of a professional network of repairers. Hot Air would like to see how they look. Email a photo of the decal on your workshop or vehicle to secretary@vasa.org.au and we'll consider publishing it.



Campaign to loosen the manufacturer/dealership stranglehold on vehicle repair information is gaining ground

At the Wire & Gas forum in June, delegates raised the question of the aftermarket workshops' difficulty in obtaining technical data on motor vehicles through the manufacturer or their agents, the dealerships.

The delegates were told that on their behalf, VASA supported the major move by the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association to launch a Choice of Repairer Campaign.

The aim is to protect choice and competition in vehicle repair, servicing and replacement parts sectors by eliminating any technical or legal barriers that impact on the Australian consumers' rights to have their vehicle serviced, maintained and repaired at competitive prices in the workshop of their choice.

In response to the delegates' demand for more action, VASA promised to let members know how they could contribute to the campaign, and in the meantime, they will be kept informed through these pages.

The man spearheading the campaign is Stuart Charity, Executive Director of the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association.

He recently returned from Europe where he undertook a great deal of research into the breakthrough laws which now apply there.

There are regulations governing the distribution of technical and

diagnostic information related to the servicing of motor vehicles, and protecting the consumers' rights to have their vehicle repaired or serviced in the workshop of their choice.

This regulation has recently been renewed and strengthened by the European Parliament. In North America, the aftermarket industry is campaigning to prevent manufacturers from unfairly restricting access to information and tools.

This has resulted in Right to Repair Acts being legislated in two US states. A Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act was also introduced into the US Federal Senate in March 2010 and has already received significant bipartisan support.

In Australia, there remains no regulated process to ensure that vehicle manufacturers make available vital repair and service information to independent aftermarket businesses.

This means independent aftermarket parts suppliers and workshops in Australia must rely on the goodwill of vehicle manufacturers.



This is a growing problem for consumers. It is estimated that over a 10-year period, a vehicle will require service and repairs approximately equal to one and a half times the original purchase price.

Each year it is estimated that vehicle owners spend over \$8 billion on parts and services. Consumers are paying too much because this is not a fair and open playing field.

Based on the Aftermarket Association's analysis of the situation in Australia and the insights and experience of international colleagues, the Choice of Repairer sub-committee has come to the view that the introduction of a Choice of Repairer Act in Australia is the only solution.

The US has already worked its way through the introduction of a voluntary industry code and it is now working on legislative solutions. Voluntary codes don't work where there is unequal market power - the small independently owned repairer

cannot match the power of global vehicle companies.

Following his recent visit to Europe, Stuart Charity reported that while the EU model provides a fantastic precedent on which to base the Australian campaign it also brought home the reality of how far behind Australia is, and the amount of work needed to do to bring the repair industry in line with the European model.

"The other major thing that struck me is the overt support for the Right to Repair Campaign from a range of representative associations and industry players that unfortunately we don't yet enjoy in Australia," Stuart added.

VASA urges its members and all Australian workshops and technicians to put their weight behind the AAAA campaign.

Here's how you do it. Go to: www.choiceofrepairer.com.au

Click on this logo



Join the campaign

Fill in the form and send it off – you will have done your bit for your industry.

Also on the site is information which will help you understand the thrust of the campaign.

How to access the TaT assist service

One of the big benefits of being a VASA member is that you receive a free copy of the TaT magazine, and with it free access to the TaT assist service.

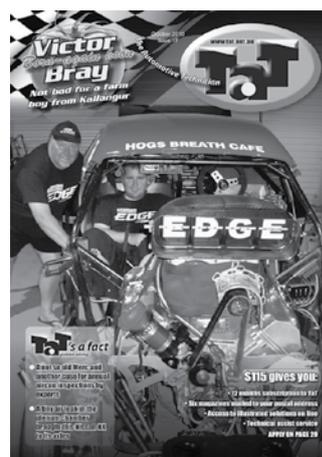
This is a web-only service, so to access technical help, members must go to www.tat.net.au and log in, using the form which will be generated when you click this link on the left of your screen.

If this is your first sign-in Click Here and enter the same email

you gave with your subscription to generate your login details.

In your case, as a VASA member, your email is already installed in the TaT system, so if it matches, you will be provided with your own password for all future visits.

When you access the TaT assist form, you must fill in as much detail as possible to give the experts time to consider your problem.



This Hot Air newsletter is published every two months, and is posted to financial members of VASA, along with the current issue of the TaT magazine.

This newsletter contains information which will help you become a more productive technician. You are encouraged to leave past issues in your waiting room, so that your customers can see that you are a member of a professional repair network.

USE THE TECHNOLOGY READILY AVAILABLE TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS AND YOUR SUPPLIERS



President Ian Stangroome explains how it's done

How quickly can you communicate with your customers?

Were you aware that in Australia, currently, there are more mobile phones in service than we have people and there are now more than 16 million computers within government departments, institutions and businesses and approximately eight million computers in homes?

Armed with this knowledge, are you using this technology within your business to maximise your efficiency and to communicate with your suppliers and customers.

With so many of us having access to mobile phone technology,

email and the internet it makes very good sense to ensure we are making productive use of this technology in our businesses.

You can order your parts and supplies on line, customers can book appointments on line, and you can even send out service reminders by email or sms.

Let your customers know their vehicle is ready for collection by sms.

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE LIMITED ONLY BY YOUR IMAGINATION

I recently returned from an interstate meeting and just waved my iPhone screen under the barcode reader at the Qantas gate before boarding.

No paper ticket or printer required. I did not go anywhere near a queue to check-in or receive a ticket. Technology!

My point is that we can save a lot of time and energy in our lives by using the technology that is readily available.

We can also leverage off these technologies for greater benefit.

The motor vehicles we all work

on incorporate some pretty fancy technology, but we are not always making use of similarily special technologies available to us to streamline our businesses and provide improved customer service.

We have all had contact with many customers over the years, but how often do we really communicate with them regularly.

With the technology available now there is no excuse not to be compiling a comprehensive database of your customers and communicating with them on a regular basis.

Create a regular newsletter every month, every quarter or every season – whatever you can manage. You must let your customers know you are still around.

With simple and low cost off-the-shelf software a professional looking newsletter can be put together in no time and distributed to your database in even less time with any of the available database management resources available.

Just make sure you follow appropriate etiquette by giving them the option to subscribe and unsubscribe as they wish.

Tell your customers about what's new or interesting in your business. Introduce them to a member of your team or promote a new service or special you intend to run.

Promote your business's community activities, run a competition or just provide some useful motoring tips.

With the resources available right now you can have an idea one moment and relay that idea out to your database within seconds.

There is no need to continually advertise to attract new customers. Look after and communicate regularly to the customers you already have.

Your customers will appreciate it and besides, if you are not talking to your customers maybe someone else is.

Could you leverage off technology more in your personal and business life?

Analyse how much technology you can further implement in your business and free up more of your valuable time.

Don't get left behind and watch technology and the competition pass you by.

If it sounds too cheap, it usually is cheap (and nasty)

One would think that by now, most people would have woken up to the tricks used by some businesses to sell more services than ever required. They live by the code that there must be 'one born every minute'.

Similarly, those who attract people to their door by cut-pricing should start looking at other reasons for motorists driving past their door.

Even more nefarious are the antics being used by bigger car businesses (read dealerships) to sell services that just aren't needed, in order to maintain their daily income quota. Stories abound of this practice and this only leads to distrust of the entire aftermarket sector.

Such practices are not confined to Australia or New Zealand.

Andy Fiffick, the chairman of MACS Worldwide, VASA's counterpart in the US, laments the decline of trusting, personalised businesses and the rise of large operations that run their business by numbers.

"It's not a new idea," Andy told his members. "Since the beginning of our industry somebody always runs low-dollar, loss-leader advertisements to lure the unsuspecting into the shop and then hit them with unnecessary services or superfluous repairs to make up for the initial loss.

"Today's tortured economy (in

the US particularly) has made this practice even more prevalent.

"We have clients who were lured away for a cheap service, only to return with horror stories about being set up with thousand dollar estimates for pointless repairs.

"Where we used to only repair what the client came in for and then suggest other repairs or services when it was in their best interest, some shops today design their business plan to up-sell everything, make quotas, and to profit off the backs of the staff and unsuspecting public.

"Playing this game is only shooting ourselves in the foot. It's no wonder the public doesn't trust us, the TV stations do

stories about our worst practices, and we can't attract new talent. I am mad as heck because the unscrupulous are damaging our industry's image for all of us.

"Every one of you who force your sales staff and technicians to sell unnecessary parts, repairs or add on maintenance items to just reap big profits have blood on your hands from the death of our industry."

The professionals, Andy says, should service every client like family, spend their money as if it were their own and build their base one customer at a time.



Our conventioners are the chosen ones

For a better understanding of VASA's commitment to training conventions, Hot Air reprints an article first published in MACS Action magazine in America in its September/October issue 2010.

The article was written by VASA corporate affairs officer Ken Newton, who has been involved with the organisation of VASA and Wire & Gas conventions for more than 12 years.

I've reached the conclusion that conventioners are a special race of people. You might call them 'the chosen ones'.

As I glanced across the crowded room at our recent Wire & Gas Convention, the show VASA hosts every two years for Australian and New Zealand air conditioning and electrical technicians, I realised that I knew about 80% of them by name.

These are the people who always turn up at conventions. They are highly professional technicians who would never admit that they know it all. They came to learn more.

Wire & Gas has now become probably the South Pacific's auto equivalent of the Club of Rome,

the most famous of global think tanks and centre of innovation.

A big statement, you say?

Where else would you find ten of Australia's leading experts and trainers in one auditorium, covering, in an intense three days of knowledge sharing, a range of subjects from hybrid maintenance to fixing the aircon on a huge piece of road building machinery.

Wire & Gas has stopped paying ridiculously high prices for ex-Olympians and sporting heroes trying to inspire workshop technicians with their own tales of triumph over adversity.

In some cases, these so-called motivational speakers cost \$10,000 just to tell us 'don't give up, you'll get there'.

The plenary session is gone, replaced by a quick overview of the industry by a couple of our gurus, an open forum and an annual general meeting of VASA to which everyone is invited.

Then it's nothing but trade show and training, with a slap-up dinner in the middle, for three solid days.

So as I looked around the room at the familiar faces, I couldn't help but wonder where the rest of the 20,000 or more potential

delegate technicians were. Why is it that year after year since these conventions began in 1993, do we see mainly the same faces, with a smattering of new people.

Regardless of the state of the economy or of the motor industry, we can never get more than 400 people to a convention.

And how come, with this recent convention, the biggest promotional campaign ever launched through our leading wholesalers still was only able to capture the same sea of faces and a handful more.

Is it the cost, the apathy, the distance?

Can't be the distance. One delegate travelled five hours by plane and another seven hours on the road to get to the convention from a remote Western Australian mining town.

He's so desperate for knowledge that he would think nothing of driving half way across the continent to go to one training night.

He pleaded with us 'please give us more training, we will go anywhere to get it.'

A guy I'd never seen before at any convention came up to me, and with real tears welling up in

his eyes, thanked me over and over for allowing him to come to the best show of his life.

"I have one complaint," he added. "How can I listen to every one of the ten trainers when there are only five training sessions available?"

That's true. Delegates have to choose which of the five sessions they will attend.

I asked him the name of the workshop he owned. "Oh, I'm just an employed technician at a big workshop in Melbourne.

"I paid my own way to come. And the sad part is that when I turn up at the shop on Monday morning, my boss will ask me if I had a nice weekend. He won't be interested in anything I have learned, or how I might be able to apply what I've learned to the welfare of his business."

Now that's apathy, or would you call it stupidity.

I'm thinking of a new approach to marketing the VASA brand.

We publish a list of the convention delegates and tell the motorists of Australasia that these are the smartest auto technicians in the land. Why would you take your car anywhere else?

A selection of the chosen ones

This is by no means a complete album of chosen ones, but just a small selection of familiar faces, taken from pics at Wire & Gas 2010.

These faces represent those VASA stalwarts who can always be counted on to be at every convention or training event, no matter where.

All are highly qualified tradesmen in their own right, but they share an insatiable appetite for more knowledge.



Chris Smith
Clermont QLD



Greg Morris
Narrabri NSW



Neill Mitchell
Charters Towers
QLD



Duane Ottaway
Cairns QLD



Gavin Lyons
Perth WA



Paul Henderson
Nowra NSW



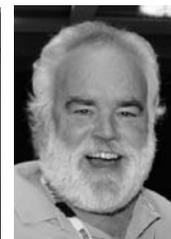
Dave Jackson
Adelaide SA



Dave Harwood
Glenfield NZ



Rodney Smith
Hamilton NZ



Kim Mainwaring
Devonport TAS



Colin Beards
Narangba QLD



Terry Gatley
Underwood QLD

VASA is the only organisation that has put up its hand to look after the interests of the vehicle air conditioning, auto electrical and cooling repair industry.

VASA is like most organisations or industry groups that are run by a team of dedicated diehards, who often work tirelessly, without reward, to improve the working lives of their industry mates.

But VASA actually provides something very substantial and tangible, and unattainable anywhere else.

VASA doesn't just offer membership of a 'club' so that you can swap yarns and meet occasionally over a beer.

VASA shrugs off the occasional barbs such as, 'Your membership is small compared with the number of technicians doing air and electrical in Australia and New Zealand, so how can you say you represent the industry.'

The statement is true, but the conclusion is nonsense.

Nobody else has put up their hand to help. No other organisation in Australasia is representing the people on the tools in air conditioning, auto electrical and heat exchange workshops.

It seems inequitable that so many technicians belong to nothing, while a relatively small number of fearless individuals do all the work. But that's true of pretty well any volunteer organisation you like to name.

There's no real solution to the questions these statements pose.

People either understand the value of being in a network, or they don't.

Inducements to join, or stay connected, are really just buying loyalty, and that's not the way it should work.

Far too many people join an organisation and then when they get their first renewal notice, they jump up and down, saying 'what have they done for me', or 'what did I get out of it'.

And therein lies the real inequity.

What is VASA?



A timely refresher course

These characters, I call them the 'users' have not grasped the essence of membership of an association of like minds.

All they did was pay their dues, then locked themselves away in their workshops for a year, hoping that some miracle would be performed by VASA to make their lives more profitable or exciting.

They never lifted a finger to help, and nor did they take advantage of any of the facilities or activities that are organised for them.

For example, VASA members have access to a very active technical help service. Many members use it, but they are not the ones we have to convince of the value of membership.

Our claim is that if every member used this service once in the year, they would most likely recover the full value of their membership, through the time and effort saved on just one vehicle problem.

On top of that, the undisputed bible of air conditioning repair, a huge volume of technical bulletins compiled over a seven year span, resides in the VASA information vaults, free to members to read, download and put to work.

If that is not enough, most of the recent technical bulletins written by MACS Worldwide in the US are available to members, free, by virtue of an affiliation agreement struck back in 2005 by VASA directors at the big MACS convention in Las Vegas.

That was a costly little exercise in itself, which VASA members did not pay for. Volunteers picked up the tab rather than use the members' funds.

So whenever a VASA member says, 'What's in it for me,' the response is the following:

'You have to be prepared to listen – to use the network, read the technical stuff we gather for you, take part in the discussions and conventions. If you are looking for a club, join something else. If you want to improve your skills and your business and make more money – join VASA.'

When you phone some members and ask if they are renewing, you can expect the occasional 'Mate...I really don't get anything out of being a member. Tell me why I should rejoin.'

It's a common thread. I know of many people who are scaling down their memberships of everything from the local progress association to the football club. Everybody is nervous about the economy. Everybody is tightening their belts because we simply don't know whether we are going to be able to afford petrol, or go on holidays, or buy a new house.

Memberships and other 'intangibles' are the first to go.

How do you explain to a member of an organisation like VASA that we have people out there spending long hours looking after their interests.

Your directors keep an eye on regulation and legislation, they work closely with organisations involved in refrigerant recovery and management, they respond to queries from a variety of organisations and individuals on matters relating to technology, workplace health and safety and environmental issues.

The reason associations get involved in this sort of activity might appear on the surface to be a nice day out followed by a few beers before they jump back on a plane, but if we don't do it the industry would remain ignorant.

Don't expect Governments to give you the bad news as well as the good news.

Everyone in business needs a watchdog.

That's what VASA is. That's just one of the reasons you pay your membership dues.

Grant Hand wowed them at Wire & Gas – you can see him at his best on this special air conditioning servicing DVD that comes with a 24 page workbook. Get your order in at the special VASA price of \$40.

To order your copy, email secretary@vasa.org.au with your name, membership number and phone number and we will post it to you immediately along with your invoice.



VASA Board of Directors

Web access for members



Ian Stangroome
President
Director Corjay Aire
Pty Ltd, Adelaide



Mark Padwick
Vice President
General Manager
Sanden Australia
and Chairman
of the Australian
Refrigeration Council



Mark Mitchell
Director
Director SCA Australia
and Chairman
SuperCool Pty Ltd,
Southport



Deyan Barrie
Director
Director Barrie
Auto Electrics Pty
Ltd, Sydney and
The Automotive
Technician Pty Ltd



Jeff Smit
Secretary
Treasurer
Director Tower
Motors, Sydney and
The Automotive
Technician Pty Ltd



Tim Grimes
Director
General
Manager Sales
and Marketing,
CoolDrive
Distribution,
Melbourne



Catherine Tocker
Director
Director CoolCar Air-
Conditioning Centre
Hamilton NZ

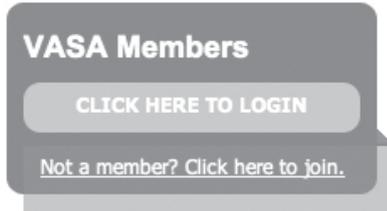
Contact VASA directors or part time officers via the email addresses or phone numbers listed on the VASA website.

Calls are still coming in from members who are having difficulty accessing the member pages on the VASA website.

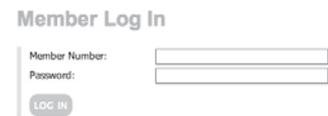
Some were trying to use the password they had for the old website of several years ago. They no longer work.

The old website has been replaced by a brand new one and for access to the site you must follow this logon procedure:

1. On the front page of the site, you will see this box. Click to login.



2. Type your member number in the first box. In the password box type, in lower case, the first four letters of the suburb in which your membership has been listed.



If that doesn't work, please check your membership number and suburb and try again.

Remember that after five password attempts the site will lock you out, and you will need to wait 10 minutes before trying again.

difference between the VASA website and the TaT website.

The VASA site is all about your association and the information it holds in the member library comprises volumes of technical data, plus technical bulletins from our affiliate organisation in America, MACS Worldwide.

VASA does not offer a problem assistance service. This is provided free of charge to VASA members by the TaT team.

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, the TaT team has taken on the role of technical help, but it is not a phone in service.

So VASA members need to be very clear about what they are looking for on the web.

Here's a general rule:

For matters affecting your membership of VASA, technical archives containing the Registered Technicians Program, consumer information about VASA and a full listing of all members by location and type of membership, the website address is:

www.vasa.org.au

If you have a serious technical problem with a particular vehicle, no matter what the problem is, and for access to a growing library of vehicle faults and solutions, the website address is:

www.tat.net.au

With password entry to websites, accuracy is essential. A capital letter in your password will block your entry. So will an errant full stop, comma or any other accidental key stroke. So let's clearly explain the

VASA members risk losing their membership status if renewal fees are not paid within two months of the financial year, which begins on 1 April each year.



All 51 bulletins of the famous VASA RTP bible on vehicle air conditioning are available to members at www.vasa.org.au

ON YOUR WEBSITE FOR MEMBERS ONLY

- All 51 bulletins of the famous VASA RTP bible on vehicle air conditioning
- MACS Worldwide service bulletins from Feb 2005
- Hot Air newsletters back to May 2005
- Annual Reports and minutes



Go to the members pages at www.vasa.org.au to see the latest MACS service reports.

VASA is proud to be affiliated with MACS Worldwide