



HOT AIR

NEWSLETTER

1st Issue 2004

of the Vehicle Airconditioning Specialists of Australasia Feb 2004

National Secretariat: VASA ABN 39 063 969 783 PO Box 2204 Southport Queensland 4215



Convention June 2004

FILE THIS ISSUE OF HOT AIR IN YOUR VASA FOLDER

SURVIVAL

Whether they accept it or not, those working in the vehicle air conditioning industry are now staring down the barrel of a smoking gun of life-changing issues.

The gun has already been fired. It has killed off more technicians than you might imagine. Yet others are finding rocks to hide behind, but no matter how often they poke their heads up, the gun will still be there. The smarter ones are loading their own six-guns, with



knowledge and training. They want to stay in town and they have no intention of letting progress beat them.

Story continued on page 4

Licensing Latest Apply now with VASA - forms inside

All VASA technicians are being urged to apply for their licence under the new national Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act, putting them in the box seat to carry

pected around mid year.

Every technician who is working in vehicle air conditioning will need this licence.

National Refrigeration & Air Conditioning

new regulatory regime. The government has advised that all ARCTick card holders will be entitled to initial recognition under the new licensing scheme. The licence costs \$55 including GST and will be valid through to at least 30 June 2005.

VASA has negotiated this fast and smooth track for obtaining the licence, using the special application form included in this issue of Hot Air.

In effect, it grants all technicians a year's grace before they must



meet the competency requirements of the licence, which have been benchmarked to Certificate II in Automotive (Mechanical Air Conditioning).

Story continued on page 2



on their business with a minimum of disruption when the licence comes into force, ex-

Council Ltd (NRAC) is working with the government to assist in the transition to the

Hot Air is produced with the generous assistance of Atofina and BOC



BOC Refrigerants

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FREE DVD
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Did we mention there's a free dvd??

Licensing

Apply Now for Marketing Edge

Continued from page 1

If VASA members apply for licences now for all technicians, they only need to supply a copy of qualifications at Cert II level in Automotive Air Conditioning for a full certification, or supply a declaration from the employer that they have worked continuously in this industry for at least the past two years for a provisional certification.

The certification level you are applying for is BLUE (Auto Air Conditioning)

VASA President Mark Mitchell has welcomed the initiative, claiming that it will give all VASA technicians the edge when the legislation comes into force.

"It means that all of our members can immediately advertise that they are licensed, the day the regulations come into force. If VASA workshops across the country can say that, it will put them in a prime position to take up their rightful place as market leaders. It also shows the public that they are responsible and professional workshops.

"I believe members should take full advantage of this opportunity and support it to the hilt. They should also consider mounting big promotional campaigns around mid year because this will be one of those once in a lifetime opportu-

nities to jump on an environmental and professional bandwagon which can only improve your business and keep out the opportunists," said Mr Mitchell.

"Sure, there may be some criticism about paying another fee, but for most states, this fee replaces fees they may already be paying for ozone levies. This new national licence takes over from state and territory based ozone legislations and any fees which may go with them.

"We also don't hide the fact that most VASA members who are sole traders or small workshops, need to also become registered as buyers of fluorocarbon refrigerants and this will be an annual cost on the business of an expected \$200. We are still trying to lobby for a combination licence/registration for sole traders at a reduced fee.

"What NRAC and VASA are saying is that these costs will be more than offset by the extra business which will flow into promotional-savvy workshops when the corner garages and other opportunists find they can't buy gas for their quickie top-ups. With gas top-ups gradually fading from the scene, it means that all repairs and maintenance must come to those with the licence to handle the gas and properly diagnose the repairs,"

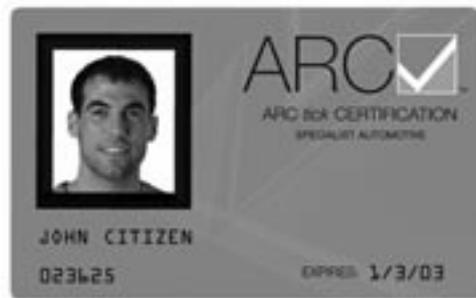
added Mr Mitchell.

"It has been VASA's dream for years to reach this stage and I urge all members to take full advantage of the opportunities licensing will bring.

The NRAC application form is included in this issue of Hot Air, especially modelled for VASA members. The sooner all members respond and sign up every technician in their workshops, the easier the transition will be.

It is regretted that NRAC in their enthusiasm, posted out a generic licence application form to many members. Throw these away and use the modified form in this issue of Hot Air.

All these licences, whether full or provisional, will stay current through to June 2005, giving all technicians plenty of time to raise their skill levels to the Cert II benchmark, if they haven't already done so. How these competency tests will be conducted will be relayed to members in plenty of time.



Already have a current State or Territory Licence? Here's what to do.

These stories mention a 'transition' period for those states and territories which have an ozone or environmental licensing system in place. These will be replaced after the middle of this year by the national scheme.

So what should you do if you are a technician with a licence you have just renewed and it has 18 months to run.

1. Register with NRAC (use the form in this issue of Hot Air), but DON'T PAY THE \$55.

(You have already bought your current licence and that will be recognised and honoured until it expires)

2. Registering with NRAC means that you will get your next renewal from NRAC instead of your usual state or territory government department. It also means that you will be kept informed about the licensing requirements, giving you plenty of time to ensure that you will pass the compliance test with flying colours when you have to renew.

3. Just keep going as you are now and when your licence is near expiry date, you will receive a notification to renew through NRAC.

4. If you have a licence, such as the New South Wales licence, which has the notation "When revoked" as the expiry date, you should register with NRAC with the form provided in Hot Air, don't pay the \$55, and the licence will be honoured for three years from July 2004. Then you will need to buy an NRAC licence for \$55 or whatever the rate is

in three years time. By registering with NRAC, you are notified of any changes with respect to your licence.

NOTE: If you are the technician which also runs the business, you will need to be Registered to buy refrigerant gas from your wholesaler. Details of how you get this Registration will be available in the next issue of Hot Air and NRAC will also keep you informed once you register with them.

VASA...

After ten glorious but hard years, VASA is changing both its structure and its direction.

There is no denying that VASA has made its impact where it matters most. But, just as vehicle technology is changing rapidly, so too is the way of doing business. To survive, VASA needs to be able to restructure itself when necessary and re-assess what benefits it offers to its members.

The VASA Board – four out of the five directors – met in Melbourne at the end of last year and spent a long day looking in the mirror.

Many of the old guard are leaving the industry, but new blood is pouring in. This means that future technicians are going to need a strong organisation to maintain their flow of knowledge through some challenging times.

The news is not bad, however. The Board sees a bright

A New Direction

Board believes the organisation is best equipped to be the go-between from Government to workshop simply because of its weight of knowledge of the day-to-day requirements of technicians.

In brief, here are the main decisions from the Board meeting. Members please note that Constitutional changes with regard to executive structure will obviously need to be ratified by the next Annual General Meeting in June 2004.

Mitchell steps down

• After 10 years at the helm as Foundation president, Mark Mitchell will retire – but not depart. His notice of resignation of the presidency was tabled at the November 2003 Board meeting. His term will expire at the

secretary and corporate affairs consultant Ken Newton as pro-tem Executive Director, with a mandate to steer VASA's new direction for the next six months, and then possibly for the next couple of years.



Mark Mitchell
President

• Meetings will be held to progress a proposed merger between VASA and AAAE, for purposes of achieving savings in economy of scale, but with both organisations retaining their own identities. (Wire & Gas has become an ideal marriage of two organisations with parallel interests)

• The membership structure of VASA will remain the same, with workshop service centre members paying current fee levels, and a concerted campaign will be launched to encourage membership at corporate levels by OEMs



Glen Watkinson
Vice-President

• Directors Mark Padwick and John Blanchard travelled for their own corporations to the MACS convention in the USA in January, with a mission to canvass OEMs and gather intelligence which may assist VASA's push to achieve a closer relationship with OEMs



John Blanchard
Treasurer

AGM on 11 June 2004.

• The Board has approved a recommendation to the membership that will see a reconstituted Board, expanding it from the current five to seven, and instead of a President, there will be a part time Executive Director and a Board chairman.

• Mark Mitchell is prepared to remain on the board (subject to re-election of course) and would maintain, but perhaps share, his key positions on the Board of AFC, RRA and NRAC. The involvement of these top organisations in the current licensing campaign was one of the main reasons Mark has stayed on as President without challenge for so long. The licensing program and its associated training agenda are his pet subjects and VASA owes him a huge debt for having devoted so much of his own and his company's time to meetings and lobbying on behalf of members.

• The Board has appointed current

• Urgent approaches will be made to selected OEMs to have them involved at a training level in the 2004 convention.

• Urgent attention will be given to formalising VASA's role as a Registered Training Organisation or in partnership with an existing RTO.

• The future role of VASA was defined as being a focused after market organisation, whose prime purpose was to properly service the public with the products stipulated and manufactured by the OEMs.

In short, VASA must strike a closer relationship with OEMs, and attempt to eliminate the fear that the aftermarket specialists were in competition with the OEMs and their dealerships.

Story continued on page 4



Barry Rogers



Mark Padwick



Ken Newton
Secretary



Leaders of the Australian Association of Automotive Electricians, Deyan Barrie (president) and Jeff Smit (secretary), who have spearheaded the closer relationship with VASA through their enthusiastic involvement in the Wire & Gas series of conventions and workshops over the past two years.



and interesting future for those in the industry who are prepared to take on board the advice VASA and others have been giving for the past few years.

With the new national licensing scheme and controls on HFCs coming up, VASA is trying to position itself as the one place all Australian technicians and workshops can come for their licensing queries, training and competency assessments. The

~~SURVIVAL~~ →

Wire & Gas Convention 2004

Continued from page 1

It is against a backdrop of new licensing regulations, control of HFC refrigerants and the world focus on more advanced air conditioning systems using at least three new refrigerants under development, that the Wire & Gas Training Convention and Trade Show will be staged on the Gold Coast over the June long weekend this year.

The two organisations behind Wire & Gas, VASA and AAEE (auto electricians), are not purposely being melodramatic, but they are hearing too many sob stories from technicians who have been in the business for years and are today bending over car engines with their trusted old multimeter and scratching their heads.

The message is clear. If you haven't bought one new piece of tool technology in the past four or five years, you need to book yourself a seat at this convention without delay and even if you have to sleep on the beach, pay your registration

and soak up the unbelievable knowledge and information which will flow from a battery of world experts in the business.

In the entire history of the original VASA convention, and even the 2002 Wire & Gas convention and subsequent regional workshops, there has never been a clearer focus on the problems and challenges besetting those who work on the climate control or electronics of the modern car.

The Regional workshops, which have been a huge success around Australia, have revealed for perhaps the first time, that the vast majority of vehicle technicians are desperate for more knowledge and more training on the systems now becoming common place in most vehicles.

There are some horror stories in this edition of Hot Air about people who have been in the industry all their lives and thought they knew it all...only to find

over the past six months that they can't even get a system to tick over because they can't access the codes with the gear they've got.

Hence the theme of this convention SURVIVAL.

If you can access the internet, go to www.wireandgas.com and read about the speakers and the issues which will be presented. As more speakers and program details are set, the website will be updated.

The first wave of Registration papers has been posted to all VASA and AAEE members, as well as those who have attended any regional workshop and the last convention in 2002. All of these people will have first shot at the convention seats, with a Mates Rates deal of \$395 for a full delegate registration.

This rate will be in force until 20 March 2004 (extended from 1 March for Hot Air readers) and it will rise about 10%, but will still be well below the non-member registration fee of \$495 (all figures include GST).

Trivia Department

Only 4% of customers ever complain. Some simply suffer in silence. Most go elsewhere.

People who stop buying from, or dealing with a particular business do so because:

1% die

3% move away

5% seek alternatives or develop other interests

9% begin doing business with the competition

14% are dissatisfied with the product or service

68% are upset with the treatment they have received

It is six times more expensive to acquire a new customer than it is to retain an old one.

Happy customers, or

customers who have their complaints satisfactorily resolved, will tell three to five people.

An unhappy customer will tell at least 11 other people, who in turn tell five other people – that adds up to 67 people.

Between 54% and 70% of customers who complain will nevertheless continue to be customers if their complaint is resolved to their satisfaction.

Organisations which provide superior customer service can charge more, create greater profits and achieve greater market share, because customers will generally pay a premium for superior customer service.

VASA... A New Direction

Continued from page 3

The aim is to convince them that the aftermarket is in a prime position to keep their original customers happy where vehicles leave the warranty period and beyond.

VASA's approach to the OEMs should be "how can we help you keep your customers satisfied." If convinced, it could lead to a freeing up of technical information as vehicles age.

At the close of the Board meeting, President Mitchell thanked the Board for its commitment to the ongoing work of VASA and as-

sisting enthusiastically with the establishment of a new direction for the next decade.

Footnote: Secretary Newton, with a great deal of support from Board members immediately began a round of meetings in December to energise the process of change within VASA.

The vibes are good. The success of this new direction will hinge on how well VASA sells its new role to the OEMs. VASA already enjoys the support of the country's biggest wholesalers and some OEMs. Without them, the organisation could not exist.

Members need to know that VASA's funds are devoted totally to two things – technical knowl-

edge and communication of that knowledge. In that respect, the Board is convinced it has not failed its members.

The RTP (Registered Technicians Program) has become the bible of every technician in VASA. Those who have ignored the RTP or believed they knew it all, are among those who are leaving the industry, or who are now becoming desperate because there is so much knowledge they missed out on.

The RTP grows more powerful with every year of change in the vehicle air conditioning system.

BigNamesforBigConvention

Wire & Gas has arranged some big names for the June Convention.

Several of the speakers are among an elite group of experts who travel the world circuit and are up to date with

world authority in alternative refrigerant programs and was responsible for overseeing the Significant New Alternative Program (SNAP) during the R12 phase out years.

Dave Boyd is an advanced

Robert Burns is the after-market support for Denso International Australia. Robert is a graduate from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Mechanical Engineering. He has had 18

tive edge the moment it becomes law.

On Car Training

One of the most popular components of the 2002 Wire & Gas Convention in Brisbane



Hans Fernqvist, Stephen O. Andersen, Dave Boyd, Robert Burns, Grant Hand, Jack Stepanian, Wayne Blackman.

vehicle design trends and technology developments.

In view of the work going on in Europe and America on new refrigerant gases and the systems which use them, it will be vital for Australian industry to be brought up to speed.

Here's a run down of the top names already confirmed for Wire & Gas 2004:

Hans Fernqvist from Volvo Car Corp HQ in Sweden, is the company's Specialist - Climate System and Components, making him one of the most significant figures in the development of climate control systems in the modern vehicle in Europe. He will be delivering two major papers, one dealing with an update on the regulatory issues in Europe and the other on how can R134a and the proposed new 152A systems be made leak proof.

Stephen O Andersen Ph D is Director of Strategic Climate Projects in the Climate Protection Partnerships Division at the HQ of the USA Environmental Protection Agency. Stephen is considered a

test products trainer from New York, USA. Dave made his first appearance at the Wire & Gas Training Workshop at Albury early in 2003 and was a big hit. He is sponsored by Lovelocks.

Grant Hand is an Advanced Skills Lecturer at the Douglas Mawson Institute of Technology (DMI), Adelaide and VASA training coordinator. Grant is the technical brains behind all VASA training programs and workshops and by virtue of his position with DMI is recognised as one of Australia's best automotive trainers in air conditioning. Grant developed the Registered Technicians Program, working alongside the VASA Technical Committee and has been working on the development of learning materials for work based training.

Jack Stepanian is known as the EFI and diagnostics guru of Australia. A former member of the Holden College, Jack brings a new dynamic to training for automotive electricians and has been a popular addition to the recent series of Wire & Gas Training Workshops in regional Australia and New Zealand.

years experience with Denso, mainly in vehicle air conditioning systems and products.

Wayne Blackman from InVision Australia is one of the top speakers from the big Wire & Gas convention in Brisbane in 2002. His knowledge about vehicle lighting and globes technology is second to none. He is sponsored by Ingram

Learn About Licensing

It is expected that the new licensing of technicians who deal with refrigerant gas will come into force around 1 July this year, making the convention a crucial time for information gathering on the impact this will have on your workshop and technicians.

As well as the above speakers, Wire & Gas will run a special segment dealing with the new Ozone Act and the licensing arrangements. This will involve RRA (Refrigerant Reclaim Australia), NRAC and the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO). Overtures are being made to see if technicians attending the convention can be tested and receive their licences on the spot, giving them a competi-

was the workshops on actual vehicles.



Greg Picker, manager of the Greenhouse Offices Synthetic Gas Team and Refrigerant Reclaim Australia's General Manager Michael Bennett will be at the convention to help ease Australia's technician into the new licensing and recovery era.

This year, there will be more cars and more training on vehicles, on a paved tennis court area directly outside the ballroom at the Gold Coast International Hotel. More time will be allowed for the training.

Trade show

At least 30 trade booths will be operating at the convention, with plenty of time available for browsing through the exhibits and talking with trade experts. There will be tools and technologies covering everything from Auto air conditioning to car electronics.

The rolling series of Wire & Gas Training Workshops rolls on into Tamworth in New South Wales on Saturday 27 March.

It will be the last regional Wire & Gas show before the big convention in June 2004 on the Gold Coast.

Wire and Gas Does Tamworth

If you're thinking of attending either event, you need have no fear about repetition. VASA's strong advice is that if you can afford to



do both, DO BOTH. You won't be disappointed.

Two of Australia's top trainers in auto electrical and air conditioning will be there, plus the very latest tools and technical information from leading companies.

June Convention is a Real Bargain

- If you book before 20 March 2004

A special mates rate of \$396 (inc GST) has been struck for the Wire & Gas Convention on the Gold Coast in June.

In terms of value for money, it's the cheapest training and information gathering exercise you will find in your industry.

But this Mates Rate of \$396 will finish on 20 March 2004 for Hot Air readers. After that, it rises to \$445 (inc GST).

Before anyone starts screaming 'Why do you want our money so early?', here's the answer. Wire & Gas is run mainly by volunteers. Running a convention plus a trade show takes time and money. The costs are kept low to help you, therefore it is important to have your commitment and your money early.

...and we will be sticking to this timetable strictly. It will pay you to bite the bullet and make your booking before 20 March.



There is a booking form in the centre section of this issue of Hot Air. Please fill it in and do it now.

You will also find a run-down of what you get for your money on the reverse of the booking form.

It outlines what is included as part of the registration package and what is considered an extra and needs to be paid for separately.

Any extra tickets purchased allow access only to the particular event only. For instance, if you buy a Saturday catering package for a person accompanying you (whether they be your partner or an employee) that ticket allows them access to



lunch and morning/afternoon teas and the keynote speakers at those functions. They will not have access to any workshops or training sessions.

Our strong recommendation is that you simply buy a full delegate registration for your partner, employee or business associate which will give them the full benefit of the entire convention and trade show.

There will be no single day tickets. We believe that the Registration fee is so low in terms of what we are delivering, that if you are serious about this industry and about learning, you will attend the whole weekend. By selling off components of the convention we compromise the overall quality of the event. It is a composite package, not an isolated

Booking forms can be found on page 11 or the Wire & Gas website www.wireandgas.com

Wire & Gas Tamworth is the 8th in the regional series of workshops conducted as a joint initiative of VASA and AAAE (Auto Electricians). They have all been successful, with attendances ranging from 40 to just under 100.

All workshop delegates are surveyed on the spot at the end of each day's session, giving the organisers valuable feedback on what technicians want to hear in future training sessions.

Almost without exception, all delegates applaud the workshops, claiming that they learn heaps in one day about how to improve their business and their diagnostic techniques.

The regular trainers are Grant Hand, Senior trainer from Douglas Mawson Institute of Technology, Adelaide and arguably Australia's most knowledgeable air conditioning expert and Jack Stepanian the academic turned mechanic turned GMH trainer and member of the Holden College. He's known as the EFI and diagnostics guru of Australia.

The all day workshop, starting at 10am will be held at the Frog and Toad Function Centre, at 236 Goonoo Goonoo Road, Tamworth on Saturday 27 March.

Invitations have been sent to all members and all workshops within a couple of hundred kilometres of Tamworth, but if you happen to miss out on the booking form, go to www.wireandgas.com and book in on line.

Cost of the workshop is \$110 including GST and this covers your training, the trade show, morning and afternoon teas, lunch and a happy hour at the end of the day. It has been voted top value by all who have attended previous workshops. To help you make up your mind, here are some random comments from previous workshops.

"Training by Grant and Jack re-opened my closed mind and attitude."

"Many thanks for a very useful day, even for a Saturday."

"Thank God for this nutty professor and the mad scientist. Great stuff - straight forward fresh thinking."

"You wouldn't believe how much we have learnt as a business. Thank you very much."

Licensing

The guts of it

The new licensing regime which will apply to every technician in Australia who intends using refrigerant gas and every workshop which intends to buy it, is likely to come into force, with a host of new regulations, after 1 July this year.



The licensing has far-reaching effects for the industry. VASA officials have supported the new legislation and, on members' behalf, the Board has been consulted at all stages of preparation of the legislation and the formulation of the regulations which will make the legislation work on a day-to-day basis.

VASA has been deluged with calls from members who are still generally vague about how this new act of parliament will impact their business.

For most of you, who believe you are professionals, the new legislation and its licensing system should be welcomed with open arms because it will mean the end (to a large degree) of what we have always referred to as the 'gas jockeys' or the 'opportunists'. On a bad day, we call them the 'backyarders'.

Those opportunists who believe that a shot of gas is all that is required to fix an ailing a/c system, will have to stick to what they know best – their re-gassing days are over. It means that motorists will be forced more often to seek pro-

fessional advice on their sick a/c and that will mean more work flowing back into the legitimate workshops.

Given that some of these details may change in the final wash-up, here are the main points from the proposed regulations. (These are written in Government-speak – Hot Air will attempt to interpret.)

The aim of licensing technicians is to ensure that they have the necessary competencies to work with these gases in an environmentally responsible manner that minimises the likelihood of avoidable emissions. (Interpretation: You are going to have to prove you know how to manage refrigerant because it will be illegal to just 'let it go'.)

We need to first explain that regulations related to ozone legislation already exist in all states and territories. Some states and territories require



some form of licensing with fees attached.

This new national legislation will replace these state and territory requirements. Many VASA members will already be carrying such licences and they will need to know how the transition will be handled.

Here's how the proposed regulations explain it.

The granting of a licence for a particular category will be dependent on demonstration of relevant core competencies for each type of activity. (Interpretation: A minimum standard or qualification has been set for each category of work – if you don't possess these qualifications, you don't get a licence until you do get them. More on the qualifications follow.)



The main category for VASA members will be 'Full Automotive'. The training required will be 'Fully qualified tradesperson as demonstrated through recognition of prior learning or Certificate II AUR 20799 in Automotive Mechanical Air Conditioning'. (Interpretation: Nowhere do we read so far how the Government intends to apply their 'recognition of prior learning'. We doubt if technicians who have been in the industry 20 years and think they know it all, will be able to rock up to a counter and say 'I've been in the business 20 years and I know how to handle a gas bottle – now sell me a licence'.)

VASA has always told the Government that if the legislation is to have any guts at all, everyone will need to show some proof of competency, either by a written or face-to-face test with an appropriate training authority. At one stage, it was suggested, for example, that those VASA members who had completed their questionnaires for RTP 1 and 2, would have proven their competency, whether or not they had ever completed Cert II. Stay tuned on this one until we get the real answer.)

All Licences will be renewed annually.

Story continued on page 8

Licensing

Continued from page 7

The annual cost of a licence is \$55 including GST.

The new licence in all categories will replace existing State and Territory Ozone licences, thereby eliminating the need to pay current State and Territory fees of up to \$50 per year where they apply.

A condition of licence renewal will be that the individual has continued to work in the field. You will have to prove it with, perhaps, a declaration by the employer or employee.

If the licence holder can't prove this, their skills may need to be confirmed by formal testing or other means such as an on-site validation.

It is likely that, as vehicle technology changes over the next 15 or so years, new requirements may be introduced to cope. The government may require additional training as these changes occur.

A tradesperson will need to take the additional training appropriate to their licence category. However, a grace period could be provided for any new competency training introduced six months prior to licence renewal.

As a condition of licence, tradespeople will be required to self-report cases where more than 5 kg of refrigerant has been accidentally 'let go'. The tradespeople would not be punished in such cases, because the information will be used to help authorities identify causes of accidental discharges with a view to assessing trade practice and bring about regulation changes to help avoid such events.

It will be a condition that all tradespeople demonstrate appropriate knowledge on the legislative requirements of the Act. The Government mentions the development of an awareness course to facilitate tradespeople in learning about the legislative requirements.

Sole operators will require

TWO things. They will need to be registered to buy gas (proposed fee \$200 per year) and have a licence to carry out work on equipment (\$55 per year). This is because the requirements for registration are different to those needed for a licence. Requirements for Registration as a buyer of gas will be:

- Companies certify that only licensed tradespeople will carry out work where there is a likelihood of avoidable emissions (Interpretation: If you buy the gas and intend giving it to your unlicensed mate in the corner garage for his occasional top ups...think again. You are breaking the law.)
- Companies must have operational equipment to minimise emissions, such as leak detectors, recovery gear and vacuum pumps (Interpretation: Even a sole trader who is also a technician will need to buy a leak detector, recovery gear and vacuum pumps.)
- Companies must maintain up to date records of gas purchased, sold and recovered, and work undertaken (Interpretation: All workshops will need to upgrade their invoicing and/or job management software so that these details can be properly recorded and called on when required. So the new gas you put in a customer's car must be recorded properly so that you can produce a report



when the inspector calls.)

Minimum equipment requirements, including hire or ownership, will be defined within the regulations. (We don't know what they are yet, but presumably they will include leak detectors, recovery gear and vacuum pumps as a minimum.)

A system of compliance will be established, to ensure that the licence and registration systems are operating effectively. Industry, including VASA, has repeatedly advised that it favours a robust compliance and enforcement regime and the Government concurs with this. Further work will be undertaken to develop a compliance strategy covering the entire Act and a separate discussion paper will be released later this year on this subject.

Existing State and Territory licences that are current prior to the new regulations becoming effective will be recognised and honoured until they expire.

Current licences would be replaced free of charge by a national licence and this would remain valid for either three years or until expired, whichever comes first. At that time, tradespeople would need to obtain a licence from the new scheme and document that they had successfully completed any additional training.



Which way next?

Want to register with ARCTick?

Read the licence category table on the next page, fill out the ARCTick form over leaf and follow the instructions provided.

ARCTick Certification Levels

| | Qualification | Cover | Scope | Notes |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| GOLD | Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Tradesperson or Australian Registered Trade Certificate or MEM 30298 Certificate III in Engineering Refrigeration and Air Conditioning or UTE 30999 Certificate III in Electro Technology Refrigeration and Air Conditioning | Commercial, Domestic, Industrial Refrigeration and Air Conditioning and Automotive Air Conditioning | Service Maintenance Commissioning Installation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Trade does not include other trades such as Fitter, Electrician or Plumber. Training and assessment to bridge the gap may be obtained from "Registered Training Providers". •Proof of the successful completion of training to be included, Eg. A proficiency certificate |
| GREEN | MEM 201 Certificate II in Engineering Production (Air Conditioning) And Two (2) years experience installing split systems. | Split system Air conditioning up to 18kW (single head) | Installation Commissioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Training and assessment may be obtained from "Registered Training Providers". Assessment of current competencies should be taken into account. |
| BLUE | AUR 20799 Certificate II in Automotive (Mechanical - Air Conditioning) And Two years of appropriate experience | Air Conditioning systems in: Cars, Trucks, Buses, Agricultural and Heavy Plant | Service Maintenance Installation Decommissioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Training and assessment may be obtained from "Registered Training Providers". Assessment of current competencies should be taken into account. |
| WHITE | Trainee under a contract of training. Refrigeration Service Staff (RSS). | All categories Refrigerant gases | As in "Gold" and under supervision Handling and Decanting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •(RSS) must complete training in the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Wholesalers Association Inc (ARWA) code of Practice for "Refrigerant Decanting and Recycling Systems". |
| PROVISIONAL | Provisional status applies to Green (Split system A/C) and Blue (Automotive A/C) cards. The requirement for receipt of a provisional card is to be "working in the industry for two years". To ensure continues full status you will be required to complete your qualification (see above) by July 2005. | See Above | See Above | You will need to submit: The application form Passport size photo Evidence of employment (Letter from employer, Statutory Declaration, Independent Referee) Payment |

The Australian Government will honour ARCTick certifications.



Application for Accreditation For vehicle air conditioning technicians

ARCTICK accreditation will automatically entitle you to the new Commonwealth Licence when regulations under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Amendment Bill 2003* are implemented (expected mid 2004).

If you are the owner or sole operator of a VASA service centre, you will need TWO things - a licence as a technician and registration as a business in order to buy fluorocarbon refrigerant gas. Details and costs of this registration will be circulated when available.

(Please print - If there is more than one technician in your workshop, please photocopy)

Surname Given Names
Employer or Company name
Residential Address Post Code.....
Work Phone: () Work Fax ()
Mobile: Email:

The certification level you are applying for is BLUE (Auto air conditioning) (Please tick)

Tick these only if you undertake work in these areas also:

Gold (Stationary refrigeration and/ or air conditioning) Green (Split system installer)

Post all of the following to ensure the issuing of your certification card: (Place an X to confirm items are included)

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Passport photo for ID card |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Certified photocopy of qualification (AUR 20799 Certificate II in Automotive, Mechanical - Air Conditioning) |
| AND/ OR | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Evidence of employment (Declaration by employer below) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | This application form |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Payment of \$55.00 Inc GST for expiry on 30/6/2005 |
| | Have you completed Ozone-Awareness Training Yes / No (please circle) |

DECLARATION OF EMPLOYER - IF SELF EMPLOYED YOU MUST ALSO SIGN THIS SECTION

service industry.

If the technician named is an apprentice or trainee, tick here

Signed _____ Print Name _____

Method of payment - please tick (payable to National Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Council Ltd)

Cheque Money Order Bankcard Visa Mastercard

Credit Card Details Only

Card No: Exp Date: _____ Amount: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____ Cardholder's Signature: _____

I certify that the details on this application are correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signed _____ Date: _____

PRIVACY POLICY

The information provided in this Application for Accreditation will be used only for the purposes of processing and consideration of this Application and also for the administration of our database of registered members. The information in this Application may be disclosed to the federal, state and territorial government agencies and to our contracted service providers for the stated purposes only but will not be disclosed to any other party without the applicant's express consent. We may not be able to properly consider your Application unless you provide all the information. You have the right to access your information held by us at any time.

Return to:

National Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Council Ltd
PO Box 2112 Hawthorn VIC 3122
ABN: 69 097 952 657
Tel: 03 9810 9600 Fax: 03 9815 2900 Email: enquire@arctick.org
NSW Phone: 02 9585 1911 QLD Phone: 07 3823 5965 SA Phone: 08 8337 5800

Cut here to fax



~~SURVIVAL INFO~~

Mates Rates prices apply only to VASA and AAAE Members and those who have attended a Wire & Gas Workshop in Australia or New Zealand as well as those who attended either as a delegate or a trade show visitor to Wire & Gas Training Convention 2002 in Brisbane.

International delegates (Mates Rates or standard registration) are not GST exempt. The ruling is that the services are being supplied in Australia, so no GST exemption exists for international delegates - including those from New Zealand.

Mates Rates

BEFORE 20 MARCH 2004

\$396 (incl GST)
(represents a 20% discount on Stan-

dard Registration Rate) PROVIDED booking is made and registration paid in full by 20 March 2004.

AFTER 20 MARCH 2004

\$445 (incl GST)
(represents a 10% discount on Standard Registration Rate)
All bookings made and registrations paid in full up to Registration Closing Date of 22 May 2004

Non-Members

Standard Rate
\$495 (incl GST)
Registration Closing Date of 22 May 2004

Cancellation Policies

Any cancellation any time up till 5pm on 5 June 2004 - Full refund LESS 10% administration charge

Any cancellation between 5 June 2004 and the start of the Convention on Friday 11 June 2004 - 50% refund

Inclusions And Extras

FULL REGISTRATION

Unrestricted attendance at all Convention plenary sessions and training workshops
Welcome drinks
Party night
Gala dinner
Lunches and morning/afternoon teas - Saturday and Sunday

EXTRAS TICKETS YOU MUST PAY FOR:

Monday golf tournament
Monday optional training session
Ladies/partners program
Extra tickets need to be purchased for any specified activity by people accompanying a registered delegate.

**To book your place at the Wire & Gas Training Convention and Trade Show, simply fill out the included booking form and post or fax it back, together with your payment, to Wire & Gas
PO Box 2204 Southport QLD 4215 Fax: 07 5526 3404.**

Make a Name for Yourself

Conventions offer great opportunities for companies or technologies to lift themselves out of the crowd and be seen as an innovator and go-getter.

It's called **sponsorship**. Sure it means parting with money which is used to provide a great show for the delegates to Wire & Gas 2004.

But for the astute, it is a

cheap opportunity to get your name in lights, to stand out in the crowd, to be heard above all the rest and to get a strong point across. Sponsorship dollars buy you a ladder to higher things - a platform for being heard.

Wire & Gas has a range of sponsorship options for the convention in June.

Three of the four major sponsorships of \$6,000 apiece have already been taken up by Sanden, Ashdown and Melbourne Auto Air and to them we are exceedingly grateful for so willingly setting the pace.

We need one more \$6,000 sponsor, two at \$3000 and four at \$1000. The benefits are listed on www.wireandgas.com

www.wireandgas.com

And if someone would like to offer convention satchels at the right price (nothing), with your name on them, we would be delighted to talk business.

Interested?

Phone Ken Newton on 07 5526 3044 to discuss the options.

Police It —Or Forget It!



VASA has warned the Australian Greenhouse Office that the good intentions of the new licensing legislation to repair the environment will become a laughing stock without an enthusiastic policing program.

When VASA president Mark Mitchell advised all members of the draft regulations by letter in February 2004, he invited responses. He got them.

Members who called generally liked the idea of the legislation, but said that both they, and the opportunists who the legislation is intended to curb, would only scoff at the new licensing system unless they all knew it was going to be policed properly.

The last thing the industry needs are pen pushers, posing as inspectors, who don't know the difference between a microwave oven and a leak detector.

In its official response to the draft Regulations, VASA has said it generally approves of the regulations, but suggests some improvements to avoid confusion.

The regulations are difficult to decipher because they don't clearly spell out the differences between vehicle air conditioning and stationary air conditioning and refrigeration.

But the main point VASA has made is

couched in these terms:

• 'On a wider front, in the process of inviting our members to comment or at least ask questions about the proposed regulations, we found one overwhelming sentiment – that the whole intention of the new Act of parliament will fail without compliance and/or regular inspections.'

• 'Even worse, many are openly scoffing at our suggestions that regulation will improve their professional status as businesses working in vehicle air conditioning because it will eliminate those we call the opportunists in the industry. They scoff because they have seen it all before – well intentioned regulation which withers and becomes a non-effective joke through lack of will, or is it lack of finance, to ensure that it works and that those who don't comply are made to account for their actions.'

So on behalf of our members, we must pose the question to the Australian Greenhouse Office - to which industry are these regulations aimed? Is it the licensing and money making industry, or the refrigeration and air conditioning industry?

VASA therefore wants to be seen in future assessments as the organisation which issued the warning that without the follow-through process of compliance and inspection, your good intentions will remain just that.

The RTP will save you

The real value of VASA's compulsory training program, the RTP, has suddenly hit home.

To those who have ignored it since the first bulletins hit your workshop more than five years ago – you really should have taken heed and you now have a lot of urgent reading to do. We hope you remember where you put them!

To those who not only read them, but regularly returned their questionnaires to Technical Coordinator, Grant Hand – congratulations. You are ahead of the pack and will stay that way. Not only will you stay in business, but pretty soon you might find that you are the only person in town with the knowledge to tackle problem a/c systems. What will you charge for that service? You've obviously heard of supply and demand.

You can even apply the RTP to the upcoming licensing regulations.

An assessment test has been prepared for those seeking a licence. According to Grant Hand, those who have kept up with the RTP will do it in a breeze. The others – he says, will be pushing it uphill.

We don't wish to boast, but there were those members in the early days who turned up their nose at the RTP. Too simplistic they called it. "We know all this stuff", they wailed.

Then they didn't keep up. The RTP has changed. It has become more complex and more vehicle specific.

Today, it's the most valuable asset VASA owns. By VASA, we mean the members. You own it, so why don't you all use it.

VASA is starting to get requests from members for all the five years of RTP to be delivered in a single folio. For the first few requests, we let it go at special rates, just to cover the cost of printing.

But this is unfair to the rest of the members, who have carefully filed their RTPs in the folders provided and stored them for future reference.

So keeping in mind the 'supply and demand' theory, VASA has adopted a new price list.

We will sell members (only), the total RTP in folders, up to date, for \$600 per pack, plus GST.

We told you they would be valuable one day.

THE VASA YEAR

Year starts 1 April 2004

Annual sub renewals sent out 1 March 2004

Subs due 1 April 2004

Discount applies to prompt payment only

Please help your non-profit organisation to do bigger, better things for you by paying promptly.

Year ends 31 March 2005

New law has the environment covered
- RRA has you covered

Gimme 5

RRA, with the support of refrigerant wholesalers, will help every workshop in Australia 'do the right thing'

Five easy steps to meeting your obligations under new Australian law

1. Rent, buy or take on deposit a recovery cylinder from your refrigerant gas wholesaler.
2. Use your cylinder to recover all used and contaminated ozone depleting and synthetic greenhouse gas refrigerant from vehicle a/c systems you service
3. Drop the full cylinder into your refrigerant gas wholesaler, who will weigh the recovered refrigerant
4. Take back your empty or new cylinder from the wholesaler.
5. Collect your credit for each kilo of recovered refrigerant.

...and we'll give you

Five dollars per kilo...

Can't play the dvd included with this issue?
We'll send you a videotape.

Simply photocopy this page, fill in the form and fax it to 02 6230 4533 or phone Refrigerant Reclaim Australia on 02 6230 5244 or email: michael.bennett@refrigerantreclaim.com.au

To Refrigerant Reclaim Australia
Please send me a free videotape of your a/c gas management tutorial
(Please print)

NAME:

COMPANY:

POSTAL ADDRESS:.....

..... POSTCODE:

PHONE NUMBER: FAX:

EMAIL



Refrigerant Reclaim Australia

*For safety reasons RRA can only accept non-flammable, non-toxic refrigerants

It will be an offence to just 'let it go' – so do the right thing

Vehicle air conditioning technicians need have no fear of the somewhat sweeping, but worthwhile changes which will occur in their industry this year.

This is one of those times when new laws can be a good thing, with many sections of the public benefiting and no downsides for the workshop operators who will be rewarded for their efforts.

In response to world concerns about global warming, the Australian Government has passed significant amendments to the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989.

Refrigerant Reclaim Australia's General Manager, Michael Bennett explains that this will give the government power to regulate who uses refrigerant gas and in the process, ensure that the refrigerant which used to be irresponsibly 'let go' into the atmosphere, will be put back in the bottle and disposed of safely.

Not only can workshops feel good about their contribution to the environment, but they should welcome the fact that once the new competency-based licence scheme for every technician is implemented, they will be in the company of professionals. Industry leaders are hoping that this will virtually eliminate the amateur 'gas-jockey' who believes that a quick squirt of refrigerant was the fix-all to a struggling car air conditioner. Companies who buy or sell refrigerants will also need to be registered.

"But basically, it is about protecting the environment. It will be an offence to allow avoidable venting of fluorocarbon refrigerant into the atmosphere and recovery will be compulsory. Those who sell it, must take it back," said Mr Bennett.

The workshop can legitimately pass on costs by charging for technician's time and there's a rebate of \$5 a kilo for refrigerant collected and delivered to your wholesaler.

The new law takes a national approach and applies to all States and Territories. It also overrides existing State and Territory requirements on ozone depleting refrigerants.

Refrigerant Reclaim Australia's role for the past ten years has been to help industry fulfil its responsibilities for CFCs and HCFCs, making sure they are collected and safely destroyed.

With the introduction of the same legal obligations for HFCs, RRA is extending its program to cover all fluorocarbon refrigerants, including HFCs.

Well known vehicle air conditioning expert, Grant Hand, senior lecturer at the Douglas Mawson Institute of Technology in Adelaide, and head of training for VASA (Vehicle Air Conditioning Specialists of Australasia) is featured on the DVD which RRA is distributing to workshops around Australia. For the first time on video, Grant demonstrates professional a/c systems management and shows clearly how refrigerant should be safely put back in the bottle.

Are you really listening – or are you in denial?

by Ken Newton

I will begin this story with my disclaimer. The people referred to in this article are real people. Members of VASA in fact. My comments are not intended to cause hurt, but they are the truth. The majority of VASA members know what they are doing. Others pretend they know what they are doing. End of disclaimer.

So what brought this on? Readers of this and other magazines which publish my musings, will start to wonder if I've become a cynical fart.

But if you spent the time I spend talking to members and potential members, and swapping notes with some of our industry leaders, and listening to the bemoanings of our technical trainers, Grant Hand and Jack Stepanian, and others, who can't be named because of the companies they work for, you could only end up in the same frame of mind.

We are collectively starting to worry if some of you can read. Is it that, or are you in denial, hoping that by some miracle the technical revolution in motor cars will suddenly grind to a halt and there will be a universal switch back to spanners and screwdrivers and a multimeter.



Luckily, the majority of those who read our material, roll up to workshops and conven-

tions and generally go out of their way to bone up on new tools and system improvements, and are out there quietly doing their thing and we rarely hear from them.

There are also a lot of members who regularly phone in to fellow members and trainers looking for the answer to one of those ticklish issues which all too regularly leave the a/c technician standing there scratching his head. We don't mind helping these people, if they have already exhausted all other means at their disposal to find the answers.

But this story is really angled at those who seem to have ignored the messages which VASA has been sending for the past five years.

True story – a member was suddenly faced with a rash of new vehicles with problems and found that he just couldn't perform the usual diagnosis. The system had beaten him. The technology had just become too complex for his standard workshop tools to decipher. He was told that to perform his job, he needed to acquire a scan tool.

"But they cost a lot of money!"

So...are you in the a/c fixing business or what. Do other specialists pack up and go home when the technology gets so smart it requires smart tools to perform their job.

The tragedy is that this member and many others like him, have been to our workshops. They've seen the new tools which our wholesaler partners roll out and demonstrate. They should have

read the writing on the wall. Sooner or later, businesses in an era of escalating technology have to invest some money in smarter tools, more knowledge and training.

Those who don't may just as well close the doors and go fishing. Some have already done just that, according to the past year's surveys of members who have not re-



newed their subs to VASA.

Hasn't our message been loud enough, are you just not wanting to listen?

Sorry to be blunt, but our trainers and the other gurus around Australia are running out of time to answer technical questions which are pouring in from people who really should know better.

Genuine technical queries when all else has failed? No problem and happy to help.

But for those who profess to be professionals but don't yet own a decent thermometer, please book yourself in to the next available convention or workshop.

Have you got the message yet?

Sticking to our guns

VASA recently faced a situation in South Australia, where some workshops were attempting to become approved repairers of RAA.

It was a great idea, but VASA found it could not endorse the move because of the compromise it would have to make on its repair standards. RAA wanted the option to recommend hydrocarbon refrigerants in vehicles. Their words "A viable and cost effective alternative to R12 is a hydrocarbon-based gas". VASA refused.

The code they wanted us to break was a very simple one. VASA decided a long time ago that if it was to succeed as an aftermarket specialist organisation, it was obvious that all members must support the technical and replacement recommendations of the original equipment manufacturers. This is where VASA's strength lies.

A lot of business can flow from motor dealers to members, if the dealers know that the aftermarket workshops are going out of their way to keep the car buyers happy with their original purchase. It's a loyalty thing.

In the South Australian case, there was another issue at stake. This was the legal responsibility and duty of care by VASA and its Board. It was the Board's opinion that if VASA signed any agreement which allowed a choice of a hydrocarbon or any refrigerant for that matter which was not recommended by the car manufacturer, both RAA and the consumer would be justified in seeking damages from the specialist organisation which sanctioned their use.

VASA does not promote itself as the judge and jury in the refrigerant gas debate. The car manufacturers of the world made the rules and if VASA is to act professionally, it must follow their recommendations. None have recommended hydrocarbon refrigerants.

How to make your business...



By Grant Hand

- Increased competition (more players)
- More difficult access to technical data

These changes are further complicated because recent surveys show that system integrity (from a leak perspective) is shrinking the straight regas market, but when faults do occur they are larger, more complex and subsequently more expensive. All this on your average family \$40,000 Commodore or Falcon.

If you think there is an undue emphasis in this issue of Hot Air on industry change and the need for you to keep up – you are right. And what's more, we don't apologise for it.

The automotive air conditioning repair industry, as with most industries, is undergoing huge change, which is a serious threat to those businesses who do not become both proactive and reactive to the changes.

At the heart of these changes are:

- Rapid technological advancements
- Increased system complexity

There are three key responses to these changes.

1. All technicians must be trained (or self taught) on current systems, how they work, how to evaluate correctly and how to determine cost effective courses of action.
2. All businesses must have a philosophy of intense focus on the customer. Customer service must support professional repairs and give the customer confidence in the repairs – given that it may be an expensive job.
3. All businesses will need to network with dealers and suppliers and/or buy specialist service tools, particularly electronic scanners. Many

members have already complained of not being able to clear fault codes to get the system operating again, even after a simple loss of gas fault.

VASA aims to continue to provide information to assist technicians in a number of ways, but at the end of the day, there is going to have to be some serious direction-setting initiatives put in place by the people at the coalface of the repair and maintenance industry to address the challenges of the future.

SUSTAINABLE

I have fielded a number of phone calls from technicians who are simply lost when faced with relatively basic fault analysis on systems sitting in their workshop.

As well, a number of people have asked for an updated capacities chart. (There's one in the member's lounge of the VASA website which we compiled in 1999 and may be suitable for some of the older models, but in reality is out of date – in fact we don't intend to update it.)

The issues above are linked. Firstly, capacity charges are a guide only with data being taken straight from workshop

manuals. Most good technicians have found these need to be tailored to each system in a lot of cases. Unfortunately, many technicians take them as 'gospel'.

The correct charging procedure is to use professional evaluation via pressure/ temperatures using the capacity guide the way it is supposed to be used, as a guide only.

The other issue is that with increased system complexities you need to know what you are doing anyway. Those technicians who religiously read RTP hardly ever phone

us unless they have a real 'out of left field' problem.

We are glad to assist these people, but it's straining the VASA friendship to phone with everyday problems that could be addressed by some technical upskilling. And upskilling is your responsibility.

So do yourself a favour and go to the next Wire & Gas Convention or workshop (there's one in Tamworth on 27 March 2004) to gain a perspective on where the industry, and where you, as an individual business, are heading, and how you are going to address the issues of today and tomorrow.

Optional training at convention

The optional advanced training on the Monday 14 June at the Wire & Gas Training Convention, will concentrate on a number of specialist areas that consistently challenge the skills of even the most professional workshop technician.

Here is a teaser of just two areas to be covered:

Modern electronic systems

How do they work? What is multiplexing, serial data, CAN.BUS, LAN? Why can't I add a second evaporator or fridge unit? Why does the system cut out? How does a modern system really work and why is patching in an additional system really dangerous?

Refrigeration system design

Capacity, performance and limitations. This is for the non-ordinary systems. It applies to truck, tractor, earthmoving and agricultural systems. Why don't some of these systems work? How do I add a second evaporator? Do I need to change the pump? What hose sizes do I need?

Other issues to be canvassed will include customer relations, selling your services, lifting your business image and profiling of customers. Wire & Gas will extend these subjects if workshop operators will give a little feedback before hand. **Email your thoughts to info@wireandgas.com or fax to 0755263404.**

VASA, like any association which has a limited membership base, depends on subscriptions from members for much of its working capital.

But, we seem to be plagued with the same problem which faces other associations – and that's members who don't pay dues on time.

In VASA's case, the membership fee is extremely low by professional association standards, and the VASA board has insisted that the fees remain at the current figure for service centres of \$275 (with the discount).

In fact, some of our members, despite reminders and follow-ups, seem to pay their bills when they feel like it.

Need we remind you that payment of a membership fee is an obligation of your membership and protects your right to display the VASA symbol, take part in

PAY UP and play the game

VASA activities, get technical help and download otherwise valuable and unobtainable technical data from the website.

While we tend to recover most of the subs in the end, this process of extending the payment period for up to nine months in some cases, makes it very difficult for VASA to plan its cash flow and also takes up, dare we say wastes, enormous amounts of time by our volunteer and consultant staff.



Time spent chasing late payers could be better spent on more positive issues.

This problem is not unique to VASA. However, we can only hope our members take note of the consequences of their actions and try to change such behaviour in the coming years.

For the record: VASA's membership year runs from 1 April to 30 March each

year. The subscription invoices are sent out in early March, with the subs due for payment about a month later, on 1 April. We usually then allow 1 month to pay, which takes it up to the end of April.

After that we send out OVERDUE invoices.

It really astounds the Secretariat how many members last year simply threw good money away by ignoring the substantial discount on fees, and actually paid the higher fee of \$302.50, simply because they opted to pay late for whatever reason.

This coming financial year will see a tougher line being taken on subs.

You are either a member or you are not. How quickly your cheques hit our desk indicates how serious you are about being a member and reaping the benefits of membership..

...and don't tell us we have to spell those benefits out again!

After all, it's their money...

Two stories came our way in recent months. Both are true and both point to the simple fact that your attitude towards your customers dictates whether they spend money with you or not.

The first concerns a lady on the Gold Coast of Queensland who wanted to buy a new car.

She was getting out of a Honda and wanted to go back to her car of first choice, an Audi. She one previously and loved it.

Off she went to the Audi dealership (name withheld in case they want to change their attitude) and began drooling over the new models.

The salesman sidled over and did the unforgivable. He assumed that being a demure, slightly built woman, she knew nothing about cars. He was condescending, talked down to her and generally acted the

male chauvinist pig.

She was so upset by this treatment, she politely said she would go home and think about it, but under her breath vowed she would never set foot in that showroom again to be humiliated by a common salesman.

Know what she did. True story. Drove straight down the road and bought a new Merc.

So it just goes to show that a person will happily set aside a long held favourable view of a product if the person they are dealing with treats them badly. The Audi dealership will only learn a valuable lesson from this if they read this story. If not, and the same salesman is still there, they will go on losing business.

Another guy we know wanted a new Lexus. He went to a dealership (again on the Gold Coast) and spent about 15 minutes opening and closing

doors and generally sniffing around. He was aware that the only salesman was on the phone, chatting in a voice which could be overheard. It was obvious that the phone call was personal and not business related.

Our man gave the salesman the benefit of the doubt and patiently waited. After all, the car on the showroom floor was the one he wanted and the colour was right. He was prepared to buy on the spot. If only the salesman knew that.

Time ticked by and it was obvious that the salesman was prepared to let him stew. Either that, or the person on the other end of the phone was more important than the customer.

Our man left. He drove straight up to a dealership in Brisbane and bought a \$120,000+ Lexus off the floor. He drove it down to the Gold Coast dealership, wandered in and told

the manager his story. The salesman was fired, we were told.

Again, the lesson is clear. Customers will go to any lengths to avoid an unpleasant experience when buying a product or a service.

Customer relations are so simple. Be nice. Be honest. Listen. Offer advice when asked.

But never, ever assume that the customer so desperately wants your product or service that they are prepared to overlook any of your disgusting habits or hang-ups to get it.

"Customers perceive service in their own unique, idiosyncratic, emotional, irrational, end-of-the-day and totally human terms. Perception is all there is!" – Tom Peters

Inside the website

One of the joys of being a VASA member is that you get access, via a password, to the technical information stored on the VASA website www.vasa.org.au

This is an ideal way for a far flung organisation like VASA to communicate with its members and share valuable technical information to make your job easier.

If you are planning an internet connection from your office, you would be crazy not to have a 'favourites' link to VASA.

In the technical library, we currently have these:

- Inspection - Diagnostic Checklist
- Flushing of auto air conditioning systems including retrofit to R134a
- Orifice Tube Pressure Chart
- Refrigerant Capacity Guide
- Compressor / clutch failure check list
- Maintenance and care of A/C Equipment

All of the Registered Technicians Programs from Year 1 to Year 4, covering literally thousands of diagnostic topics are on the website, inside the member's lounge. Year 5 RTPs will appear on the website soon after 1 April 2004.

Then there's the awesome collection of presentations to the Brussels vehicle air conditioning summit, held in Europe last February.

This is a must read for anyone in the industry.

Other topics include refrigerant gas issues, hydrocarbon issues, policies and codes, minutes of VASA meetings, VASA representations made to government agencies and, last but not least, a complete collection of VASA logos for members to use and supply to their signwriters in all configurations.



Don't leave now... it's just getting interesting!

No organisation likes to lose members, VASA included.

Occasionally, very occasionally, a member complains that they don't wish to retain their membership because they don't get anything out of it.

We could say 'get a life'. Perhaps we should say, 'Get your eyes checked.'

We sent this particular wholesaler this letter instead:

"In our routine checking on late subscriptions, I had Warwick from this office chat with you last month and in his report he advises that you wished to let your membership lapse.

I'm really not in a position to argue the toss with you, but I am going to have one last shot to keep you as a member. I will either convince you that you need to reconsider or you will simply throw this in the bin with the cry "nice try but tell him he's dreaming."

Frankly, we don't like to lose members, and we like to think that with the resources we have, VASA does the best it can to satisfy the demands of all members with solid information about the industry and more down to earth issues such as a better deal from the bank on Eftpos fees.

Being a wholesaler, we understand you have different issues than the people out in the workshops of Australia. However, due to changing trends in the industry, there has never been a more vital time for wholesalers and the people in the trenches to share their problems and aspirations. Those wholesalers who have been taking part in the series of Wire & Gas workshops around Aus-

tralia are reporting excellent results from this field work. More and more wholesalers are beginning to realise that their share of the market is going to depend very heavily on the relationships they can develop through training and product information with auto air conditioning workshops.

That's why we are saying it is important to reconsider your decision, if indeed, you consider that the products you have are important to the auto air conditioning industry.

The executive members of VASA, who work so hard to help members (for no money I might add), with technical information feel very strongly that those who don't stay abreast of the technology will find it hard to survive when the new wave of vehicles come off the production line. It's not just this industry. The auto electricians and other sectors of the motor trade are going through similar crisis. At no other time in history do people need an organisation they can rely on for technical and general industry information. Without wholesalers such as yourself, how can VASA assemble this information and make it available to the workforce.

The incredibly small amount of money we ask is great value in the eyes of most people who use the organisation and its resources.

So without applying any further pressure to you, please reconsider your decision and if we can help advise you on how you can make better use of VASA, please don't hesitate to ask. We will do what we can."

He left.

'Good luck, Buddy'.

NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Any VASA member with a new product or service is invited to use this forum - only \$75 inc GST per insertion ...and it also goes on the website for three months.

Send submissions to the Editor, Hot Air
info@vasa.org.au Ph: 07 5526 3044 or Fax: 07 5526 3404

Jayair carry over 300 NEW Genuine Denso compressors and clutches

Jayair's new Denso range covers all the popular vehicle makes, Toyota, Mitsubishi, Honda, Suzuki and Subaru.

If we do not have the compressor to suit your application, use a NEW Genuine Denso bare compressor, just change the ports and swap the clutch and the car or truck is back on the road. A selection of these compressors is listed below.

| DENSO MODEL | JAYAIR PART # |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 10P15C (R12) | CM 1740 |
| 10P13C (R134a) | CM 1748 |
| 10P15C (R134a) | CM 1749 |
| 10PA15C (R134a) | CM 1750 |
| 10PA15L (R134a) | CM 1751 |
| 10PA17C (R134a) | CM 1752 |

For more information on our Denso range or any of Jayair's extensive range please feel free to contact your local distributor.

Do not know your local distributor?
Call 1800 635 247 and one of our staff will guide you in the right direction.



Melbourne Auto Air
Ph: 03 9890 7333
Fax: 03 9890 4043

Email: sales@melbautoair.com.au
www.jayair.com.au

Viper Aerosol Coil Cleaner

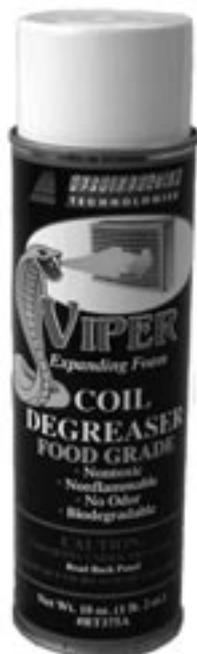
Viper is a potent degreasing compound which does not contain hazardous ingredients or give off fumes.

The aerosol injector produces a penetrating foam which liquefies and rains after a few minutes, removing heavily imbedded grease and grime.

Excellent for cleaning condenser and evaporator coils. Condenser coils require a light water rinse, while evaporator coils require no rinsing at all.

Safe to use on all metals and plastics.

Replaces the Toxic Coil Blasters.



Micro LED A/C Detection Lamp

A tough, light weight, maglight-style pocket UV lamp.

Features include:

- 100,000+ hours LED
- Constant ON switch
- Momentary ON switch
- Lithium batteries included
- Holster included
- Limited lifetime warranty
- Choice of 3 UV bulbs/ 2 Blue bulbs or 5 UV bulbs



Both products available from SCA Australia Pty Ltd

Part Sales: 07 5571 1936

Email: sca@sca.com.au

www.sca-australia.com.au



VASA helps slash credit card fees

The VASA secretariat thought it was doing well when it met with Westpac last July and managed a reduction in merchant service fees on credit card transactions of 1.29%. Since then the fee has fallen further. At the time of going to print, it was at an all time low of 0.84% (excluding GST), effective from 1 November 2003.

This great rate is for members only (and also applies to AAAE members). Which means, if you are among the small number who have let your mem-

bership lapse, you will still be paying an arm and a leg on credit card transactions. Before VASA negotiated the lower rate last July, the rate was 1.52%, so huge savings have been achieved in less than a year.

For many members in service centres and wholesale, the savings on this fee alone will far outstrip the VASA annual membership fee. While this should not be the only reason for joining VASA, it is nevertheless a fair incentive.

The new low fee is available

to all VASA members, whether or not they bank with Westpac. Association and Alliances Manager for Westpac Business, Christine Lata, also issues the reminder that the more members who use the facility, the greater the likelihood of even better rates in the future.

Those VASA members who are existing Westpac merchants, but not currently receiving this special rate can call 1800 029 749 and provide their trading name and address, VASA membership number and contact name and number to qualify for the 0.84% rate.

The VASA secretariat reminds

members that only those who are fully financial can apply for this rate. VASA has given the bank a current list of financial members.

Any VASA member who has not yet signed up for the Westpac merchant facility can also apply in the same way.

The new merchant service fee of 0.84% (which does not include GST) of turnover, payable monthly, applies to all Bankcard, MasterCard and Visa card transactions (minimum of \$20).

Debit card fees are 0.20% of total debit card turnover.

The establishment fee of \$75 is waived if a VASA member transfers their existing facility to Westpac.

The information in this newsletter is supplied by the executive, members and affiliate bodies in Australia, New Zealand, USA and Europe. VASA maintains a high standard of editorial and technical content but can accept no responsibility for the accuracy of the statements made nor the technical information provided. If in doubt contact the secretariat or an appropriate contact from the list below.

VASA READY REFERENCE DIRECTORY 2003 - 2004

Directors & Executive

Phone

Fax

Email

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Mark Mitchell (President) | 07 5571 1986 | 07 5532 8602 | mmitchell@sca-australia.com.au |
| Glen Watkinson (Vice President) | 08 8347 1155 | 08 8268 8048 | glen@caraire.com.au |
| John Blanchard (Treasurer) | 03 9896 7300 | 03 9890 0061 | johnb@melbautoair.com.au |
| Mark Padwick (Director) | 02 9791 0999 | 02 9791 9029 | mpadwick@sanden.com.au |
| Barry Rogers (Director) | 64 9 573 3392 | 64 9 573 3395 | auckautoair@clear.net.nz |

Wire & Gas (Joint Committee with AAAE)

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Mark Mitchell | 07 5571 1986 | 07 5532 8602 | mmitchell@sca-australia.com.au |
| Deyan Barrie (AAAE) | 02 9476 6277 | 02 9477 6062 | BarrieAutos@one.net.au |
| Mark Padwick (Director) | 02 9791 0999 | 02 9791 9029 | mpadwick@sanden.com.au |
| David Ellis | 07 3252 9050 | 07 3252 4166 | davide@carair.com.au |
| Jeff Smit (AAAE) | 02 9439 6772 | 02 9966 8511 | TowerMotors@bigpond.com |
| Ken Newton | 07 5526 3044 | 07 5526 3404 | secretary@vasa.org.au |

Secretariat, Corporate Affairs, Editorial and Website Consultants

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Ken Newton | 07 5526 3044 | 07 5526 3404 | secretary@vasa.org.au |
| Warrick Steele (Database/ Accounts) | 07 5526 3044 | 07 5526 3404 | secretary@vasa.org.au |
| Nick Fritzkowski (Technical/ Web) | 07 5526 3044 | 07 5526 3404 | secretary@vasa.org.au |