



HOT AIR

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2009

The Automotive Air Conditioning, Electrical and Cooling Technicians of Australasia

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Warranties, dodgy parts and customer education

Every now and then members draw our attention to the problems they are having with parts warranties. They complain that when a repair job goes pear-shaped, they are the ones left with the empty wallet.

The VASA board debated the warranty issue again recently, and agreed that in the new VASA Code of Conduct, currently being re-written, special attention is given to warranties and how members should handle warranty issues with their customers.

The most recent member complaint highlighted the problems which can arise when a customer cries poor and the workshop opts for cheaper, less reliable parts which keep breaking down. In one such instance, the member said he ended up hundreds of dollars out of pocket because he could not charge out his time spent constantly replacing cheap parts.

There's a simple answer to this.

Don't use cheap parts. But that's easier said than done if you don't want to lose too many customers who are facing tough economic times of their own.

We know of many workshops that will refuse to undertake the work on a vehicle if corner-cutting demands are made.

They take the view that this is the customer they don't need. Better to spend time cleaning the workshop than waste the hours and put up with the dramas which will often follow use of low standard parts.

VASA Board member Jeff Smit, who delivers diagnostic and business improvement training for The Automotive Technician (TaT), as well as running his own workshop in Sydney, shares his views on these problems in this issue of Hot Air.

The Queensland VASA day on Saturday 17 October is a low cost event featuring an air conditioning/electrical training combination. This is your last chance to register.

In case you haven't noticed, air conditioning repair and maintenance in today's vehicles require a knowledge of electrics and electronics. The top trainers in both topics will be at the Brisbane event, and members and their staff are urged to come along and join in.

It's also an opportunity to get on your soapbox and let your fellow members know what irks or pleases you, and there'll be enough trade displays around the room to keep you fully occupied all day.

Turn to the back page, fill in the form and fax it in, you won't regret it.

The training event that beats them all



Plans are well advanced to make the 2010 Wire & Gas Training Convention at the Gold Coast's Royal Pines Resort the best and biggest ever.

Since the trade show underpins the convention to a large extent, the committee set about contacting all previous exhibitors, and some new ones, to gauge their intentions.

The committee was overwhelmed. Without too much urging, 47 booths were booked and it's possible that next year might see the convention break through the 50-booth mark, and head for a record 55 or even 60 booths.

"This is an excellent result so early in the planning. If we can now match that enthusiasm with sponsorships and then a record number of delegates, the convention will be cost neutral," said committee chairman Mark Mitchell.

The Wire & Gas Training Convention has earned a reputation as the most important training convention and trade show in Australasia for vehicle air conditioning, electrical and cooling technicians.

Members should begin planning now for a stimulating long weekend and a tax-deductible break from the daily grind.

- **June long weekend 11-14 June 2010**
- **Trade show target - 50 booths containing the latest and greatest in tools and technologies**
- **Training sessions - longer and better than ever**
- **Learn to Earn - a new emphasis on helping workshops to work smarter**
- **The best networking you will ever find in this industry**
- **... and have fun at the same time - bring your family**



Communication is the name of the game

The VASA board of directors has congratulated the Australian Refrigeration Council for its refreshing new approach to communication.

Early in the life of the new licensing body, VASA lobbied long and hard to get the ARC and its government overseer, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, to send out more messages about the new environmental regime to the consumer public as well as the trade.

In recent months, the ARC, under its relatively new CEO, Glenn Evans, and the chairmanship of Mark Padwick (a VASA director), has been reaching out with unambiguous messages to the Australian media and the trade.

The messages are designed to build a consumer culture of recognition of the ARC symbol and licensed technicians and workshops as guarantors of professional practice by people who know what they are doing and who have a care for the environment.

All this is good for VASA members and licensed technicians generally.

The most significant communication from ARC hit the desks of every advertising manager in the nation, warning that any business or individual who advertises refrigeration or air conditioning services must include their permit number in the advertisement. Without it, they are committing a federal offence.

This means that any advertising or signage at your business premises must carry your AU number in the case of a refrigerant trading permit, and the L number if you are a private technician. The AU number is the important one since most technicians, even if they are sole operators, must have an AU number to be able to purchase refrigerant.

This campaign alone is going to have a significant impact on the ARC audit process, which is an essential component of the legislation. Without vigilant auditors, the backyard workshops can, and will, thumb their noses at the laws. This not only defeats the purpose of the legislation but muddies the marketplace for the consumer. And a murky marketplace makes it difficult for the professional workshops and technicians to compete for and retain customers.

In truth, the more the motoring public know about the licensing regime, the better. Imagine the perfect world, where motorists with an aircon problem cruise the workshops looking for the one with the AU number clearly displayed. It is worth recalling one of Abraham Lincoln's great insights: "With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed."

The VASA directors are pressing ARC to strengthen the audit process.

Drive-by auditing will help pinpoint the unlicensed when the AU number display is fully implemented. Any workshop with a sign out front for a/c repairs and no AU number can expect a knock on the door from an auditor.

Don't hesitate - do them in

VASA members regularly complain that while they are doing the right thing, too many workshops, mainly panel beaters, are side-stepping the rules. When quizzed about how they handle the refrigerant in damaged vehicles, the majority just shrug their shoulders and claim the crash resulted in the release of every last gram of refrigerant. "Not likely," say our members.

The ARC welcomes information that may lead them to uncover unlicensed workshops which are flouting the law.

VASA will repeat an offer made some months ago - if any member suspects that a workshop is handling R134a without a

licence, or the proper equipment to ensure capture of refrigerant, report it direct to VASA (secretary@vasa.org.au).

But be sure to provide sufficient information for an audit visit. Provide the name, address and phone number of the business together with your suspicions. VASA will guarantee to pass the information on to ARC anonymously. ARC will accept information from VASA because they realise the information comes from a valid source.

And here's one important fact that you can share with those customers who question why a/c leaks must be fixed and not just 'topped up' - if released into the atmosphere, one kilogram of R134a has the same greenhouse impact as two tonnes of carbon dioxide. This is the equivalent to the emissions from running a mid-sized car for six months.

Apply online for licences or trading authorisations

From 1 July, licence and trading authorisation applications were able to be lodged with the ARC online.

Using the online RTA application form ensures that:

- all the mandatory fields have been completed
- the electronic signature has been ticked
- all RHL holders' details including trainees have been entered
- all equipment is detailed including make, model and serial number
- electronic payment detail is correct.

Each RTA and RHL application is assessed by ARC, to ensure all details have been provided, and that they satisfy RTA and RHL conditions.

To apply online, go to

www.arctick.org

Latest on the new refrigerant

**HFO1234yf on
stream in 2011**

German car makers back away from CO₂

As world car makers and government agencies move closer to total acceptance of the environmentally acceptable replacement for R134a, VASA is placing retrofitting and future refrigerant management high on its training and information agenda.

It's early days yet, because component manufacturers are still involved in complex studies on HFO1234yf, to determine its compatibility with existing systems.

Its makers, a Honeywell/Dupont scientific partnership, claim it will be a 'drop in' for R134a, with no complex retrofitting required.

VASA plans to invite a senior member of the Honeywell team to the next Wire & Gas convention in June 2010, to provide an update. Following that, the Board of Directors has agreed to plan a rollout of training sessions on the new refrigerant.

In the meantime, the German car makers are reported to be backing away from their earlier preference for a natural alternative, CO₂, because of the commercial realities of designing, building and operating CO₂ systems. For example, any CO₂ fitted cars which make it to Australia would require specialist technicians and tools to fix them.

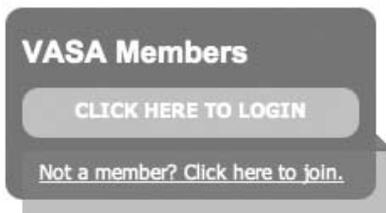
The president of the German car makers association VDA, Mr Matthias Wissman, has been reported as saying, "We need agreement on a worldwide standard to maintain the competitiveness of the European automotive industry. Separate individual solutions are not an option."

WEB ACCESS FOR MEMBERS

We continue to get regular calls from members who are having difficulty accessing the member pages on the VASA website.

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 membership number in the first box and 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

Member Log In

Member Number:
 Password:

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.



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

When empty gas cylinders are never empty

This piece of advice is for VASA wholesaler members or any members involved in moving numbers of cylinders around, either making deliveries or from depot to depot.

A Brisbane-based wholesaler member was making deliveries of R134a when he was stopped by the Highway Patrol and put through the wringer because he didn't have a manifest detailing the load on the truck, and didn't have a certificate to verify that those gas bottles which were empty, were in fact empty. He had only 800 kilos of refrigerant on board so was let off with a caution.

The Patrol officers added up every cylinder on the truck and to calculate how much refrigerant he was carrying (over a certain amount he has to show a hazard warning on the truck), they presumed that all the bottles were filled to capacity. When the driver indicated that a number of the cylinders were empty, they just shrugged their shoulders and said "Where is the certificate, then?"

It was the first time he or his superiors had ever heard of an empty cylinder certificate, so nobody knew how to raise one. Also, this would impact on the cost of sending empty bottles around the country, because without this certificate they are apparently all deemed to be full of refrigerant.

VASA tracked down some experts in this field, and here is their advice.

Cylinders, and any other container used for the transport of dangerous goods, are not classified as empty until they have been deemed empty by a competent person.

In order for a cylinder to be deemed empty the contents have to be 100% purged from the cylinder – simply emptying the contents through the decanting process of recharging other tanks does **not** empty the tank 100%. There is always a small amount of residual in the cylinder.

In the Australian Dangerous Goods Code, edition seven, page 617, the following reference covers empty containers and the need to treat them as though they are full:

"Cylinders, pressure drums, MEGCs, portable tanks and other pressure vessels (other than aerosols) that have contained dangerous goods of Class 2 and are not free from dangerous goods must comply with all relevant provisions of this Code as though filled with the dangerous goods."

Therefore, all trucks transporting cylinders between customers and depots should treat all

cylinders as if they are full. The only exemption is for new cylinders or internally reconditioned cylinders that have not been filled with product.

With thanks to the combined efforts of Glenn Evans (ARC), Gary Kenworthy (Actrol) and Greg Deitch (EIAS Pty Ltd).



New decals for your business

New VASA window, door and mobile unit self adhesive decals are being printed for distribution to all members.

These decals, which will replace the original circular ones featuring the old logo, will measure 250mm wide by 370mm long, and will contain an area for inclusion of your AU number, as now required under your licence obligations.

VASA will be surveying all members to list their AU numbers, and with each decal the member will receive their five self adhesive numerals for adding to the decal.

Defaulting members can't use VASA logo

VASA has recently acted to have its logo removed from buildings, Yellow Pages advertisements and websites belonging to members who have long-since defaulted on their annual subscriptions and have shown no intention of rejoining. One was in Auckland, New Zealand.

Members who don't make arrangements to pay their dues within two months of the renewal date, can be struck off the membership. In these rare situations, it is fraudulent to continue to represent themselves to the public as VASA members.



The Automotive Air-conditioning, Electrical and Cooling Technicians of Australasia

Member

AU

The Code spells out the things you **MUST** do and the things you **SHOULD** do

This is the last in the series of explanations on the automotive Code of Practice.

Hot Air has now published the entire Code of Practice, with comments, section by section, to help with interpretations. VASA has received great assistance in this exercise from Bill Penfold at Sanden International in Sydney.

Bill was honoured as a VASA pioneer in 2006.

VASA and the Motor Trades Association of Australia were both acknowledged for their technical contributions to the Code.

It is important that technicians understand that this Code is delivered on the assumption that those who pick it up to read it, **already know what they are doing**.

Too many technicians are expecting the Code to be a full-on workshop manual. It is only supposed to be read by technicians who are already well trained, and have at least the minimum Certificate II standard of understanding of vehicle a/c systems.

This Code does not constitute a technical design document and must be used with other standards and Codes of Practice already in existence - in particular, AS 4211.1 - 1996 gas recovery or combined recovery and recycling equipment.

A.22 De-commissioning

A.22.1

Any automotive system leaking refrigerant must either be repaired in accordance with this code, or alternatively the owner must be advised that the system should be de-commissioned by a licensed person.

VASA NOTE:

Note that the repairer can only 'advise' the customer. Until the customer gives permission, their vehicle and all the refrigerant in it, leaking or not, belongs to the customer. It could be help if the customer was reminded that if they choose to run an a/c system low on refrigerant for any length of time, they risk a monumental and costly future problem, including replacement of the compressor.

A.22.2

In the case of a vehicle that is being scrapped or dismantled, the air conditioning system must be de-commissioned.

VASA NOTE:

De-commissioning means removal of any refrigerant. VASA would also recommend that the person who de-commissioned should place a tag on the system, noting the date the de-commissioning took place, and the name and phone number of the technician performing the task.

A.22.3

When any air conditioning system is de-commissioned, even where there is an intent to re-install the system in another vehicle, all the refrigerant must be removed from the system as noted in A.9 "De-gassing."

A.23 Retrofitting

A.23.1

Permission from the owner must be obtained prior to any work being performed.

A.23.2

A comprehensive performance and component check list should be provided which would record all relevant details. Where components are considered doubtful, this should be brought to the vehicle owners' attention.

A.23.3

Wherever possible, retrofit guidelines should be referred to. Leak testing must be carried out prior to and after retrofitting.

A.23.4

A label containing the following information must be affixed to the vehicle following service and/or repair of the air conditioning system:

- i. Name of service organisation
- ii. Name and Refrigerant Handling Licence number of the technician carrying out the work
- iii. Date of service or repair
- iv. Quantity of refrigerant
- v. Type of refrigerant
- vi. Type of oil
- vii. Odometer reading

A.23.5

In the case of a retrofit to R134a, the special R134a charge fittings must be attached to existing and easily accessible 1/4" charge fittings in such a way that they become an integral part of the system. Any other 1/4" fittings must be plugged to prevent their further use.

A.23.6

Where the use of non-fluorocarbon refrigerants is contemplated, the relevant state and territory legislation, where this exists, should be referred to and complied with.

VASA NOTE:

The standard of dialogue between the technician or service manager and the customer will invariably determine whether the repair job runs smoothly or turned into an awkward argument over the necessity for, or the cost of, repairs.

Workshops these days face few problems explaining the refrigerant handling regulations to customers. If leaks are found in the a/c system and expensive repairs need to be carried out, the customer will usually accept the inevitable and support the technician's recommendations.

On the other hand some workshops complain of losing customers because they just wouldn't accept the workshop's advice or wouldn't accept that the technician had a responsibility under the new legislation to fix a leaking system and not just top it up with gas.

There are two issues to consider here. Either the workshop is not explaining the new licensing requirements adequately or it should accept that there are some customers who may never be convinced and therefore these are the customers you might well do without.

There is an obligation on the workshop to explain the workshop's responsibilities under the legislation. If a customer refuses to accept that these obligations are now law, then the workshop needs to make up its own mind whether or not to accept that customer.

This is not turning business away. Look at it more as turning trouble away. That customer may well find another workshop which is prepared to close its eyes to the leaks and just squirt it full of replacement gas. Sooner or later, as ARC auditors step up their campaigns and close the gaps between amateur and professional, the disbelieving motorist will get the message, and who knows, may very well end up back in your workshop.

So the message is, stand firm on your professional obligations, and don't be afraid to walk away from jobs which will only end up in angst. The fact that you have tried to educate the customer means that you have done your best for the environment.



FOR SALE
Well run, totally organised
and profitable Aircon and
Auto Elec business

*Some good advice from your President
Ian Stangroome*

It was mentioned recently that one of our number was looking to sell their business. A short debate about whether this was accurate information or not was interrupted by one of the group stating that “regardless, everything is always for sale at the right price”.

I gave this a little thought because it reminded me of what I had said to an acquaintance a few years ago who had interrupted me during a clean up of the workshop. When he said “Looks like you’re getting ready to sell”, I replied, “A business should always be ready to sell”.

What I meant by this was, whether you were in a frame of mind to sell your business or not, you should be constantly striving to reach that point of peak saleable condition. Think of it as akin to selling the family car.

When it comes to the inevitable time to get rid of your pride and joy motor vehicle for the best possible price in the shortest, stress free amount of time, you would generally make sure it is in its most presentable condition. You would make sure it’s running right, sparkling clean inside and out, the service books are up to date and the finances in order.

Why would it be any different for a business?

Take a look at your own business. Could it be sold tomorrow in a deal you would be happy with?

TAFE students could be VASA’s future

A number of Australian TAFE colleges are taking an interest in VASA as a means of keeping their air conditioning and auto electrical students up to date with world events that might impact on their chosen industry.

By forging relationships with those colleges which specialise in automotive training, VASA also sees the potential to encourage more younger technicians into the professional network.

As a trial, those colleges which have shown

Is the building presentable and clean, inside and out, or is the façade and signage aged and deteriorated? Do you have a great team and systems in place ensuring the business is running right?

Is your team adequately trained and equipped for their tasks? Are the business’s books and finances in good order? Is the customer database up to date? Do you have an asset register in place? Do you keep a handle on the accounts?

When you have a moment step back and take an objective look at every aspect of your business. Is it where you want it to be?

Do you know where you want it to be? If not, set to and lay out a vision for your business and set some goals for its direction. Once you have a vision and a goal you can then implement a plan to drive your business forward to get it into a saleable condition.

You don’t have to try and change it all at once, just make the improvements and changes bit by bit as per your plan. I am not suggesting that once you reach that point you should sell, but just imagine how great your business would be.

Just think of the confidence your team and your customers would have in a business that looked great and performed even better.

A business that is in peak condition at any time is going to be more attractive to customers and employees, worthy of repeat and referral business. A business that is running efficiently and is highly profitable is going to run itself - well almost.

Wouldn’t you buy a business like that? Or perhaps a business in that condition should never be sold, but simply enjoyed.

So if you’re not enjoying your business, what are you waiting for? Get active and ensure your business is the best it can be, has reached critical mass and is a real asset now and into the future, for everyone who comes into contact with it.

an interest in a relationship with VASA will be provided with a number of Hot Air newsletters, and an offer of free membership in VASA will be made to all apprentices for the four years of their apprenticeship.

Application forms will be made available which ensure that VASA obtains their place of employment, so that their membership can be tracked.

VASA will also consider making awards to TAFE colleges to encourage apprentices and lift the VASA profile.



Board meeting highlights

VASA’s South Australian members became the first group in Australasia to successfully negotiate an ‘approved repairer’ status for vehicle air conditioning with that state’s Royal Automobile Association, the RAA.

Not only does it expose VASA members to a huge RAA membership, but the RAA’s endorsement of our members as preferred suppliers is a great marketing edge.

The relationship between the VASA members of SA and RAA is excellent, and the RAA people appreciate VASA’s professionalism and enthusiasm.

Using the SA model, VASA has launched a strong case to all other Australian auto clubs. The response, while not conclusive, is encouraging. Only one state, Queensland (RACQ) has said an outright ‘no’.

Others which have thanked us for the submission, and are still considering their response, are RAC WA and NRMA in NSW.

VASA is stepping up its campaign to warn the motoring public of the potential dangers of using anything other than the approved refrigerants in vehicle air conditioning systems.

Now that four states have issued safety alerts warning of the occupational health and safety requirements governing the use of flammable or hydrocarbon gas in systems for which they are not designed, VASA will issue public statements through trade media.

In the meantime, VASA has made a major submission to the Queensland Gas Examiner who has offered to join with VASA to try to stem any take-up of flammable refrigerant by the agricultural sector.

Queensland is one state which takes hydrocarbon refrigerant seriously and, under the requirements of current legislation, hydrocarbons cannot be used in any mobile air conditioning in Queensland. If any is found by a repair shop, it must be reported to the government and the vehicle must be recalled.

The Queensland Gas Examiner is also keen to get the word out to all insurers of agricultural equipment who might not be aware that some farmers are using a dangerous refrigerant in equipment for which it was not designed.

It is suspected that some of this refrigerant is being ‘smuggled’ across the western borders of New South Wales and Queensland.

If you believe you are an air conditioning or auto electrical professional - start acting like one!

“The customer is always right,” the saying goes. But when it comes to professional servicing of a modern vehicle, the customer may need a little guidance to get it right.

VASA director Jeff Smit, who is also training coordinator for The Automotive Technician, has been lecturing around the country on scan tool and electrical diagnostics. A big part of his presentation is aimed at strengthening the resolve of workshop operators and technicians to better sell themselves and their skills, and to charge appropriately for them.

He acknowledges that far too many motorists seem reluctant to spend appropriate sums of money on their vehicles, but he tells technicians to take the upper hand in repair negotiations.

“You set the bar. You inform the customer how their vehicle should be repaired, and what parts should be used,” Jeff advises.

“Your reputation is on the line here and the last thing you want is jobs coming back to bite you. As your yardstick, you plan the repair if it were your own car.



It is far better for your pocket and your business credibility to do a complete and professional job, with the best quality parts right at the beginning.

“You then list all of this on your quote or invoice. If, after you’ve walked the customer through the professional repair procedure, he or she says they can’t afford it, only then do you come down,” Jeff said.

“If the customer approves the

cheaper option, you also note this on the invoice, so what you document is the recommended schedule of parts, and the parts ultimately selected by the customer.

“This doesn’t let you off the hook if the job comes back in, because you have a statutory obligation to warrant your work and parts, no matter what quality they might be.

“The best advice is to plan in advance for that one big warranty issue which will come back to bite you out of every 50 or so jobs that you do.

“Factor this warranty job into your charge out rate, so that when you have to give time away on that warranty job, you can at least do it with a smile, happy in the knowledge that you have it covered.

“This approach also means you

can change your attitude to warranty jobs, from being a pain, to a golden opportunity to show a customer how professional you are.

“You should never argue about a warranty issue. It is not the customer’s problem.

If you carry out the warranty repair, using better quality parts if you have to, you may well earn the respect of the customer for life. In the process you might also have taught the customer a valuable lesson about the difference in quality of spare parts.

“The worst thing you can do in an independent workshop, such as most VASA members operate, is to copy the discounters and sell on price.

“VASA members should sell on quality,” Jeff added.

VASA is currently drawing up a new code of conduct for its members, and part of that will address warranty issues.

FRIDAY 11 JUNE 2010

9am – 3pm Wire & Gas golf tournament at Royal Pines course (including lunch)
6pm – 9pm Official opening function at the Trade Show

SATURDAY 12 JUNE 2010

9am – 9.45am Industry update by Grant Hand and Jack Stepanian
9.45am Trainers provide three minute introduction to their training sessions
10.15am Morning tea
10.45am Open forum – including VASA Annual General Meeting
12 noon Lunch in the Trade Show
12 noon – 4pm Trade Show
2.30pm – 4pm Training sessions
4pm – 5pm Happy Hour in the Trade Show
Evening Free

SUNDAY 13 JUNE 2010

10.30am – 12pm Training sessions
12 noon – 1.30pm Lunch in the Trade Show
1.30pm – 3pm Training sessions
3.30pm – 5pm Training sessions
7pm – 11.30pm Gala Dinner

MONDAY 14 JUNE 2010

10.30am – 12 noon Training sessions and Farewell Lunch



The weather bureau is forecasting a warm end to the year for most of Australia, brought on by recent warm conditions in both the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

The average minimum temperature for October to December is also favoured to be above the long-term median minimum temperature across WA, the NT, Queensland and the north of both SA and NSW.

The El Niño event in the Pacific Ocean is expected to maintain warm conditions until at least year’s end.

PROGRAM



RACV Royal Pines
Resort

New DVD on air conditioning servicing procedure is a must-have for all workshops

One of Australia's most experienced air conditioning trainers, Grant Hand of Automotive Training Solutions, has delivered the most comprehensive and clear air conditioning service message ever produced.

It's a timely refresher course for the experienced and an essential tool for apprentices and newcomers to the industry.

to sell a professional service, as opposed to a quick 'top up' (now illegal) and an in-depth study of why components fail.

And, inside the DVD case is a 24 page workbook containing a summary of professional air conditioning service procedures.

This total package is retailing for \$50 but, for VASA members, a limited number of DVDs are available for only \$40.



Thanks to sponsorship funding from Refrigerants Australia, creative input from Grant Hand's company Automotive Training Solutions and production support from VASA, this long awaited program is now available at a special price to VASA members.

You receive a DVD case containing three programs, including a detailed air conditioning service on a vehicle, an insight into how



To order your copy, email a request to 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 supports repairer choice campaign

The VASA directors have voted to support a campaign by the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association to lobby for the opening up of the flow of vehicle manufacturers technical data to aftermarket repairers.

The campaign theme is to preserve the motorists' rights to have their vehicle serviced or repaired at the workshop of their choice and at prices determined by open competition.

Intense lobbying of the European Commission and the US Congress is currently under way

to have these rights enshrined in law.

Australia's car company dealer service centres have automatic access to data and equipment but there is no clear requirement for manufacturers and importers operating in Australia to make technical repair and diagnostic information available to independent repairers.

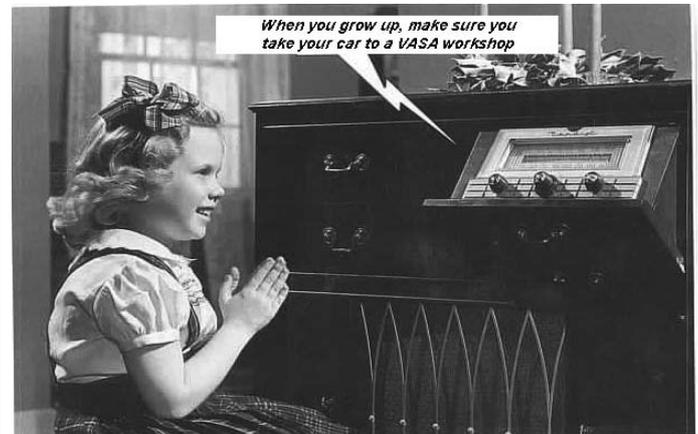
AAA Executive Director Stuart Charity says most independent aftermarket businesses find that technical information is difficult to access.

VASA takes to the air

VASA has hit the radio air waves in South Australia.

In a great show of cooperative advertising, the South Australian metropolitan VASA service centre members have funded their own campaign on a leading FM station.

made to put the VASA branding strategy in South Australia in the hands of FM radio station 'Mix 102.3'. Thirteen VASA members in Adelaide have committed to the campaign and funded a budget of \$40,000 dollars. Three radio commercials were produced and went to air in September.



In the past the SA members have consolidated their marketing efforts in a group advertisement in the Yellow Pages and also in the South Australian motoring club (RAA) magazine 'SA Motor'.

The group's venture into radio began with a lot of radio station research.

Workshop members Tony Scali (BPB Autos), Geoff Moody (Crystal Air), Wayne Trimboli (Franks Auto Electrics) and Ian Stangroome (Corjay Air) attended marketing presentation meetings with a number of radio stations to look at their product and see what they had to offer in a branding strategy for the group.

As part of the process, service centre members carried out a survey of a few hundred customers to analyse the demographic of their current client base.

With the results in from the survey and many marketing meetings later, the decision was

The, the RAA, have lent their support to the marketing strategy by donating the use of their technical assistance phone number as an answering service. The RAA phone number is being announced in the commercials as the number to call to be directed to the nearest RAA- approved VASA air conditioning specialist.

So far the feedback on the commercials from customers and members has all been positive.

A new exterior sign has been printed to support the radio marketing campaign and continue the branding of VASA to the motoring public and the trade in general.

The group acknowledges that this is a branding campaign and not a 'call to action'.

The members want to plant the message firmly in the public mind that when air conditioning services are required, the VASA workshops are the specialists of choice.

"They must rely on the goodwill of vehicle manufacturers to get the information or equipment," he said. "Some cooperate, but many do not.

"The technology playing field is not level, and in the future, customers will have less choice

about who can do their repairs and what parts are used.

Technicians and workshop owners are urged to visit www.choiceofrepairer.com.au to learn about the initiative, and to download educational material for customers.



Invites you to an action-packed one-day VASA training event for Queensland and northern New South Wales ...at the Capalaba Sports Club!

Training by Australia's top team:

Grant Hand (Automotive Training Solutions) air conditioning
Jeff Smit (The Automotive Technician) auto electrical and diagnostics



only \$90 each
 VASA member rate
 Includes morning tea, lunch, happy hour, training, trade show



Program:

- 9am Trade Show opens for early birds
- 10am Welcome and Industry Update on new refrigerants by VASA legend Mark Mitchell
- 10.15am Morning Tea (take to table)
- Grant Hand presents advanced a/c diagnostics
- 12 noon Lunch and Trade Show
- 1.15pm Jeff Smit presents basic electrical theory, diagnostic techniques and case studies
- 2.45pm VASA forum and free for all
- 3.45pm Happy Hour in the trade show
- 4.45pm Close

Saturday 17 October 2009, 13 Ney Road Capalaba QLD 4157
Easy to reach, plenty of parking...book now!

YES!... Please book me in for _____ technicians

Business name: _____
 Contact name: _____
 Contact number: (____) _____
 Email: _____
 Postal address: _____

First name and surname of all technicians attending (print)

Method of payment: CHEQUE: Payable to VASA

CREDIT CARD: **Mastercard** **Visa**

Name on Card: _____ Card Number:

Expiry Date: ____/____/____ Amount: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE FAX OR COPY AND SEND WITH YOUR REMITTANCE TO:
VASA 1 Cleg Street, ARTARMON NSW 2064 or FAX TO 1300 828 100
 For more information, call 0438 569 517