



Hot Air

NEWSLETTER

June 2013

Automotive air conditioning, electrical and cooling technicians of Australasia

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Training convention and anniversary special edition



All delegates were bussed to the SuperCool HVAC and Refrigeration Test Centre at Ormeau for the industry Forum

Wire & Gas 2013 on the Gold Coast was a huge success, reinforcing the VASA board's view that ongoing training must remain the organisation's prime focus.

Despite a shaky start, the members across Australia and New Zealand rallied to the new call for action to celebrate VASA's 20th anniversary at its birthplace, the Marriott Hotel on the Gold Coast.

More than 100 delegates were registered, just beating the attendance records of the previous two scaled-down Wire & Gas training events.

The last big convention with full trade show was held in 2010 at the Gold Coast. Smaller events, with a limited number of trade tables, were introduced in Melbourne in 2011 and again in Geelong in 2012.

And from all accounts, everyone was happy with the variety offered at the Gold Coast event.

The splitting of the event into two training locations, the Marriott Hotel and the new

SuperCool HVAC and Refrigeration Test Centre at Ormeau was a master stroke, and the delegates appreciated it.

At the hotel, the training sessions were conducted by electronics guru Jack Stepanian and business trainer Geoff Mutton.

At the SuperCool centre, veteran air conditioning trainer Grant Hand, assisted by SuperCool founder

Mark Mitchell and his team delivered the Wow factor with Australia's first working demonstration of a system running on HFO-1234yf, and active demonstrations of test equipment for compressors and transport refrigeration units.

At the bonus session with top Carrier Transicold trainer, Mick Morley, the new generation of Carrier transport refrigeration units was unveiled for the first time in Australia.

At the anniversary dinner on the last night of Wire & Gas, VASA President Ian Stangroome delivered a reminder of the continuing need for an organisation like VASA to represent this sector of the aftermarket industry. He asked the 160 people at the dinner to pledge to re-affirm VASA's commitment to work practice improvement, representation at the highest level of government, and ethical dealings with the public and each other.

Feedback from delegates included suggestions for training which should be considered at future events, and the majority voted this year's Wire & Gas as a very worthwhile event.



Most found the trade show, which attracted ten exhibitors, very interesting, and the delegates were happy with what the trainers delivered.

They would also like to see this training event at least once a year, and maybe more often. All delegates indicated their desire to attend more training events like Wire & Gas.

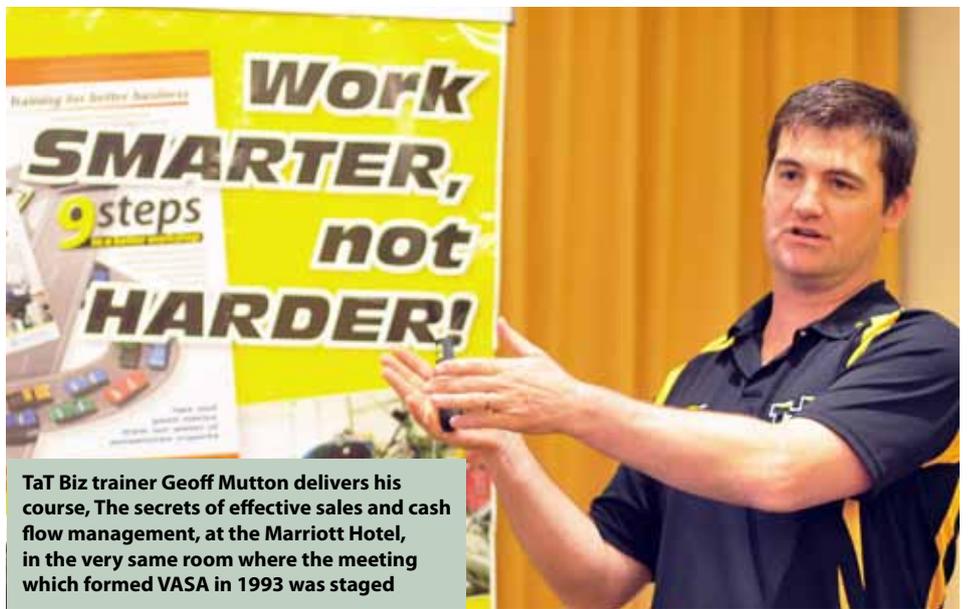
The forum, held at the SuperCool test centre after Saturday's training, was a return to the early forum years, with top industry keynote speakers and a free-ranging discussion about issues facing the modern repair workshop.

The latest survey of refrigerants in the Australian fleet was covered by Michael Bennett, General Manager of Refrigerant Reclaim Australia.

In general, the survey findings gave a clear picture of the domination of R134a in all Australian states, and the growing infiltration of hydrocarbons and a variety of mixes in South Australia and Victoria, the two states which had inadequate laws and poor enforcement procedures in the application of refrigerants.

John McCormack, Business Manager DuPont Chemicals & Fluoroproducts provided a potted history of the demise of R134a and the emergence of HFO-1234yf, and issued timely assurances about the new refrigerant's safety and suitability as a drop-in replacement for R134a in new vehicles.

The moves of educators to make automotive training more relevant to modern workshop demands were covered by Neil Hunichen, Training Package Specialist at Auto Skills Australia.



TaT Biz trainer Geoff Mutton delivers his course, The secrets of effective sales and cash flow management, at the Marriott Hotel, in the very same room where the meeting which formed VASA in 1993 was staged

SuperCool managing director Mark Mitchell conducted tours of all test centre facilities which were operating for the two days of the convention



Automotive Training Solutions head trainer Grant Hand used the test equipment at the SuperCool test centre for the practical components of his presentation, the professional analysis of automotive air conditioning systems



TaT trainer Jack Stepanian was in his usual entertaining form at the Marriott Hotel, delivering his in-depth electrical and electronic diagnostics course for vehicle air conditioning



Top trainer from Carrier Transicold, Mick Morley introduced selected refrigerated transport technicians to the latest Carrier refrigeration units, not seen before in Australia.



A bonus session, conducted by Euroscan Asia Pacific chief operating officer and head of technical operations, Shiraz Gulamali was provided to the transport refrigeration group, covering temperature monitoring and the need for validation to meet world-wide demands for cold chain food safety



VASA celebrates 20 years with a huge cake and lots of nostalgia

A huge 20th anniversary cake, featuring the VASA logo was baked in the Marriott kitchen to honour those who helped found the organisation at the same hotel back in 1993.

It was wheeled out at the peak of the Wire & Gas dinner celebration, as President Ian Stangroome called the pioneers and VIPs to the stage to help cut the cake.

The following are extracts from the anniversary speech delivered during the celebration dinner at Wire & Gas 2013 at the Marriott Hotel on the Gold Coast by President Ian Stangroome.

'In the very rooms in which you attended training sessions over the past two days, in 1993, 100 air conditioning specialists from around Australia pledged to form a network which was part lobbyist, part trainer, and part watchdog.

It was one of those moments in history, when this group of people, connected only through ordering parts and sharing the occasional story, decided it was time to rise up and protect their industry and their profitability.

Back in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s the refrigerant R12 Freon was doing its job well in the early climate control systems of those cars lucky enough to have air conditioning installed. Remember that the mass installation of air conditioning at the factory was still a few years off, so in this part of the world, Australia and New Zealand, probably up to 75 per cent of air conditioning in vehicles on the road in the 1980s and 1990s had been installed by aftermarket workshops which specialised in this work.

And they were good at it. Australian workshops had to be inventive because vehicles came here from around the world. The aftermarket aircon specialists became recognised as the only ones who could figure out and fashion an under dash installation for any make of vehicle. These people were truly craftsmen.

And it was these workshops, about 100 of them, which rallied to a call by a handful of industry leaders in 1993 to form the Vehicle Air Conditioning Specialists of Australia, VASA. New Zealand was added a few years later, to make it the Vehicle Air Conditioning Specialists of Australasia.

The organisation was widened a few years ago to incorporate auto electricians and cooling technicians.

The word 'specialists' was considered essential in the name, to separate the good guys from the backyard mob who knew little about air conditioning but thought it could be a good money spinner.

These were some of the issues on the minds of the handful of men who reasoned that the time was right for an industry body to attack issues like poor work practices, contamination of the growing Australasian fleet and the dreaded disposable cylinders.

R134a was around the corner and the workshops smelled the hot breath of over-zealous government departments that were looking for ways to make an easy tax buck out of a burgeoning new industry.

Refrigerant top-ups were out of control – any refrigerant that is. As VASA Legend and one of the founders Mark Mitchell recalls, 'Work practices were disgusting.

'Customers were being ripped off because unskilled workshops and garages knew so little about air conditioning systems that they just kept replacing expensive parts, hoping the problems would go away. Very few people could properly diagnose a system.'

'At one stage, our early leaders used to boast that 80 per cent of the real air conditioning diagnostics in this country was being done by only 20 per cent of the technicians – and they were the VASA members.

'It could be argued that that ratio has not changed. We are in an age of fixing by replacing. Diagnostics – in other words – an ability to figure out why something goes wrong, is a skill that is still in the hands of the few.'

The first meeting at the Marriott was a stirring affair. They were as one in their view that the industry needed a big shake-up, and they shared a perception that government intervention in matters like licensing, industry control, and phase-out of R12 were very real threats.

They wanted the vehicle air conditioning industry to have a champion, to take its concerns to government at the highest level and ensure

The happy cake cutters were, from left:

VASA Honorary Treasurer Don Wilesmith

Director Robert Picone

Vice-President Brett Meads

Director Catherine Tocker

Cairns original member Duane Ottaway

President Ian Stangroome

First New Zealand director Barry Rogers

New VASA Legend Ken Newton

Award winning Tasmanian member Kim Mainwaring

VASA Legend, founding President and Director Mark Mitchell

VASA's original training coordinator Grant Hand

Original member Arie Oosterveen who says he has only missed one convention since 1994

Original technical and standards expert Chris Lindeman

Refrigerant Reclaim Australia general manager and staunch VASA supporter Michael Bennett

Business Manager for DuPont in Australia and staunch supporter of what VASA stands for John McCormack

Original director and CoolDrive Distribution chief John Blanchard

Original director and industry pioneer Ralph Cadman

that the industry's needs and aspirations were fully understood by the lawmakers, especially if licensing were to materialise – which it did some years later.

VASA was formed by unanimous vote, and it became, and indeed remains, probably one of the most powerful organisations for its size in the automotive sector.

The first directors were Mark Mitchell (Gold Coast), Ralph Cadman (Sydney), Glen Watkinson (Adelaide), John Blanchard (Melbourne) and Paul Robinson (Perth).

These men, and those who supported them and did more than their share of the work to keep a national organisation alive and relevant are the people we are honouring tonight."

Read the full anniversary speech at www.vasa.org.au



Former VASA CEO Ken Newton announces the election of the new board.

VASA aims to recruit younger technicians

Newly re-elected VASA President Ian Stangroome has committed his board to growing the network in the next year by attracting and recruiting the younger generation of business owners and technicians.

In his annual report for the 2012-2013 year, he indicated that there will be engagement with the current membership to seek their assistance in this growth strategy.

He nominated the introduction of the carbon price on refrigerants as the stand-out issue faced by VASA members during the year in review. The issue generated much debate, confusion and anger and left the industry with the potential to inflict significant pain, by out-pricing member services and encouraging cheaper unregulated, unapproved and potentially unsafe alternatives to penetrate and pollute the market.

VASA had consistently spoken out in opposition to the tax, and engaged with both sides of politics on the issue.

The VASA board will maintain its strong position and continue to lobby for the responsible repeal of the carbon tax.

One of the most obvious negative side effects of the introduction of the carbon price has been the prolific promotion of flammable hydrocarbon refrigerants as a drop-in replacement for R134a. To combat this, VASA has been working closely

with industry to inform and educate the public on the unsafe nature and negative impacts of such promotion.

This included a combined industry meeting at Parliament House with Senator Don Farrell, alerting the government to the dangers of promoting and using flammable refrigerants as drop-in replacements in applications for which they were not designed or approved. VASA was also working with Refrigerants Australia on strategies to educate and inform industry and consumers on the unsuitability of using a flammable refrigerant, with explosive potential, in a system not designed for its use. Reaffirmations are also being sought from all sectors of the automotive industry of their disapproval of the use of flammable refrigerants as drop-in replacements.

Another key objective for the board is to ensure the industry continues to operate in a safe environment supported by a relevant code of practice. VASA played a key role in the introduction of the first Automotive Air Conditioning Code of Practice in 2008.

Since that time changes affecting the mobile air conditioning industry have resulted in conditions or practices which fall outside the scope of the current code of practice and highlight the need for an updating of that code.

The scope of the current code of practice does not cater for the introduction of low GWP refrigerants, legitimate or otherwise. Some of these refrigerants have differing performance properties and characteristics compared to the refrigerants currently approved for use. The board will endeavour to see that the scope of an amended code does not discriminate between refrigerant products, and that all refrigerants must be handled by trained and qualified technicians to an acceptable safe industry standard.

VASA remains committed to the implementation of a national refrigerant handling licence embracing all refrigerants.

There has been strong focus in the past year on building the network's communication systems along modern lines to help with information flow and interaction by members. Members now receive e-newsletters regularly containing industry news and technical information.

The board is determined to deliver a regional training program across Australia and New Zealand, believing that members would take advantage of a conveniently located, high quality training product delivered on their door step or very near to it.

Read the full annual report at www.vasa.org.au

President Ian Stangroome delivers his annual report, with board members watching on (from left) Don Wilesmith, Catherine Tocker, Brett Meads and Robert Picone



The Wire & Gas trade show at SuperCool



Exhibitor Leading Edge funded a professional barista to serve up real coffee in the French style during the trade show. Barista Serge Siboni, whose father was a coffee roaster in France, is a master coffee roaster himself, as well as providing a corporate coffee service.

HFO-1234yf is only months away from an Australian debut

Australian technicians are likely to see the new adopted replacement refrigerant for R134a, HFO-1234yf in imported new European cars by around September, while cars built in Australia will begin charging their systems with the new refrigerant in 2016.

This was revealed at the VASA forum, held during Wire & Gas in June, by DuPont's business manager in Australia, John McCormack.

Not surprisingly, John gave VASA members a timely run down on the new refrigerant and its properties, hosing down some of the fears which have been reported out of Europe about its flammability.

'HFO-1234yf does have a very mild flammability, but it's difficult to light,' was John's comment.

Despite the announcements that some German car makers would prefer to go to CO₂ as a refrigerant, companies like Holden and Toyota are committed to the product and they will have HFO-1234yf in cars built in Australia in 2016.

He explained that HFO-1234yf was a refrigerant

which offered a balance of properties and performance. Its main claim to fame, and its reason for being developed was that it satisfies the European Union demand for low global warming refrigerant. HFO-1234yf has a global warming potential of only four (R134a is 1,430) and a zero ozone destroying potential.

The new refrigerant is comparable in its refrigeration properties to R134a and has excellent stability and compatibility properties. Its cooling capacity is equivalent to R134a.

Only modest design changes are required in mobile air conditioning systems to accommodate HFO-1234yf.

Work practices and equipment will need some changes

In the aftermarket, John McCormack warned of some changes which would be required in equipment and work practices.

For example, service shops and technicians will need to use new equipment to cope with the flammability issue and other product differences including recovery, recycling and recharging equipment, refrigerant identifiers and leak detection equipment.

When buying recovery and recycling equipment, workshop owners need to ensure that the equipment meets J2843, J2851 and VDA (German Association of the Automotive Industry) requirements.

J2843 is an SAE standard covering the recovery, recycling and recharging equipment for HFO-1234yf and covers such issues as recovery levels, emissions, accuracy of recharging and safety. SAE standard J2851 covers equipment used to remove contaminated refrigerant from Mobile Air



Conditioning (MAC) systems.

A wide array of HFO-1234yf SAE compliant equipment is already available.

HFO-1234yf refrigerant system components should not be replaced with ones removed from a system that uses another type of refrigerant, or from a salvaged vehicle and retrofitting from HFO-1234yf back to R134a should never be done.

Because of HFO-1234yf flammability workshops will have to introduce precautions, and follow regulations for the handling of flammable refrigerants.

Despite the need for new equipment and service standards, John McCormack said HFO-1234yf was a direct substitution for R134a and was compatible for R134a components.

HFO-1234yf will be \$80 a kilo, similar to R134a, which prompted RRA's Michael Bennett to say that technicians will want to recover it for re-use because it will be so expensive.

John McCormack also said there were no plans to phase out R134a or R404a.



SuperCool technician Danny Drennan prepares the country's first working demonstration on a system operating on Opteon, the brand given to the new HFO-1234yf refrigerant. Wire & Gas delegates were the first to see both the refrigerant and the fittings.

DuPont's John McCormack said the demonstration during Wire & Gas gave his company the opportunity to demonstrate the performance of Opteon and share with Australasia's leading technicians the correct handling procedures for this new generation of refrigerants.

'Opteon will have different handling and safety requirements to R134a and the VASA workshops should be at the forefront of the air conditioning service and repair sector in promoting these new standards,' John added.

Refrigerants survey – R134a dominates the fleet, but HC still a worry in some states

Air conditioning refrigerant contamination of the Australian fleet has actually come down in the past seven years, but the use of hydrocarbon refrigerants in southern states where there is no political will to address the safety concerns attached to highly flammable refrigerants remains an industry concern.

The findings of a national refrigerant gas analysis of auto air conditioning systems in Australia, conducted by Refrigerant Reclaim Australia (RRA), with the help of VASA workshops in five states, were revealed for the first time at VASA's Wire & Gas forum in June, by RRA's general manager Michael Bennett.

A total of 350 vehicles were tested, using gas analysers. Fifty vehicles were tested in each of Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, and 100 each in Melbourne and Sydney during January and February 2013. Vehicles were selected at random.

The most significant finding was the degree of contamination of the fleet with refrigerants not intended for the air conditioning systems in the modern vehicle.

Comparing the results with the last survey in 2006, the number of contaminated vehicles in the fleet has actually come down, and correspondingly, those vehicles containing pure refrigerant (R134a) has increased (see the chart).

In Queensland, where the regulations relating to use of flammable refrigerants in systems



not designed for them is clear and, to a degree, policed, there was no evidence of hydrocarbon refrigerant either by itself or with a mix of other refrigerants in any system of those vehicles covered by the survey.

In Perth, only two of the vehicles tested contained pure hydrocarbon refrigerant, and one other had a mix of HC and other refrigerants.

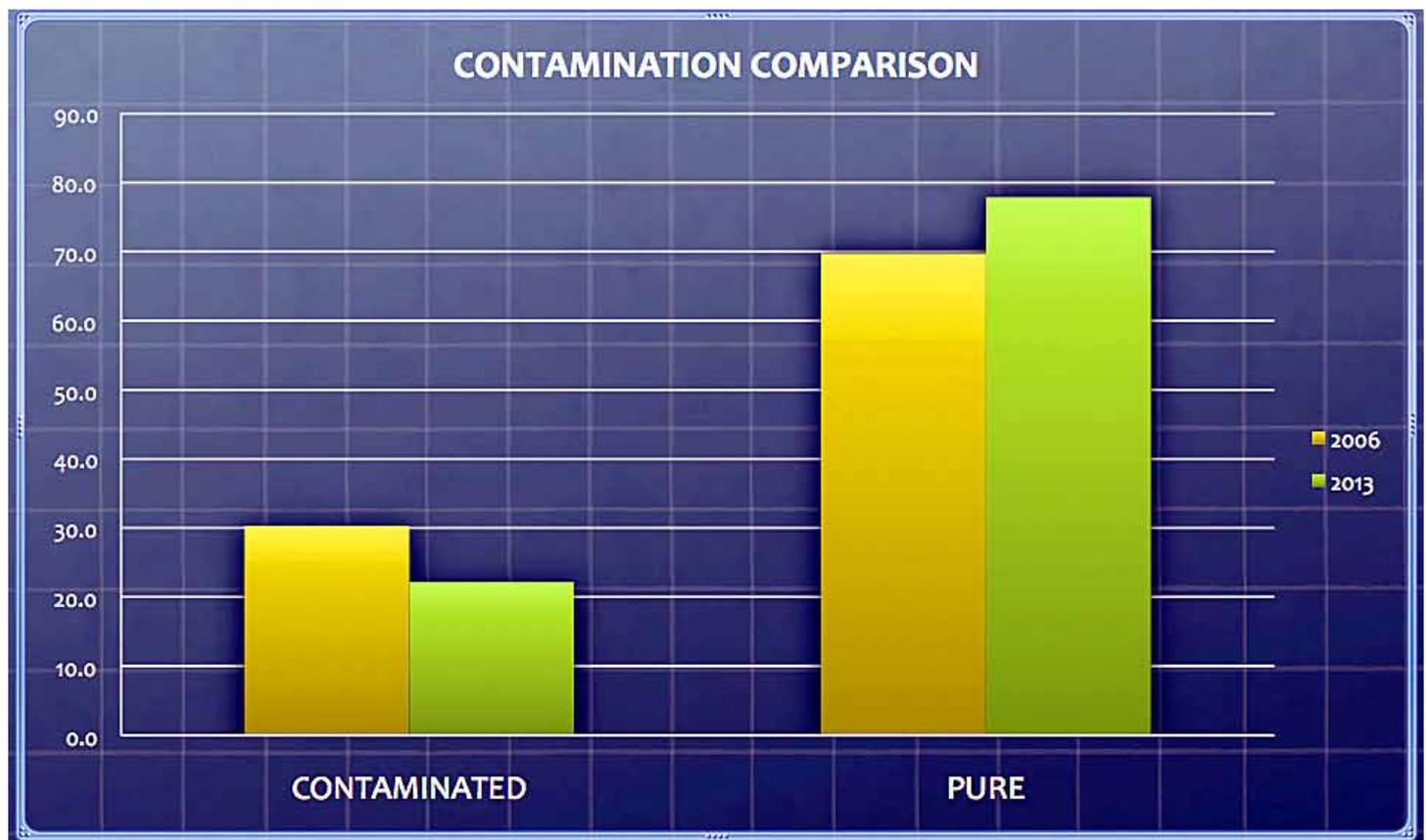
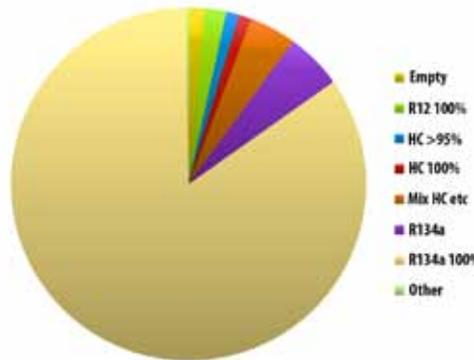
In Sydney, pure HC was found in only one vehicle in the survey, but five others had a mix of HC and other refrigerants.

In Melbourne, the only evidence of hydrocarbon refrigerant was in seven vehicles, where HC was mixed with other refrigerants, and no cars had pure HC in their system.

In Adelaide, capital of the only state in Australia which acts as if it is in total denial about the effects of flammable refrigerants in systems not designed for them, the survey found the biggest amount of contamination.

There were five vehicles with either pure or more than 95 per cent of hydrocarbon refrigerant in their systems and another three had a hydrocarbon mix. However, when measured against the 39 out of 50 vehicles tested which were charged with either pure or more than 95 per cent of R134a, it tends to make a lie of the oft-quoted claims of the hydrocarbon lobby that hydrocarbon refrigerants are common in South Australian vehicles.

Michael Bennett brought some good news with him, telling VASA members that from 1 July 2013, the rebate applied to returned refrigerant to RRA will increase from \$3 to \$4.50, with the Federal Government contributing the extra \$1.50.



Automotive Air Conditioning specialists may soon become Airtronics Technicians



VASA members have been invited to take a more active role in providing grassroots feedback to the huge changes being drafted by Auto Skills Australia (ASA) covering electrical, electronic and HVAC training and streamlined units of competency.

ASA training package specialist Neil Hunichen, in his keynote address to delegates at the Wire & Gas forum, outlined the challenges which workshops will face as fast-moving changes in vehicle technologies force training institutions to adopt a range of reforms so that they produce graduates of value to the repair shops of the future.

Neil places heavy emphasis on the need for employers to get involved in the process of re-engineering training processes and has urged VASA members to get on the ASA database and provide structured feedback on ASA draft proposals. He said industry specialists needed to get on board to make a difference to the future of the highly skilled national workforce which vehicle technology will demand.

Among the many reforms flagged by Neil are more up to date descriptions of automotive roles, such as Airtronics for a/c technicians and Autotronics for auto electricians.

ASA is the national advisory training body responsible for the development of automotive retail, service and repair qualifications, skill sets and their embedded units of competency. These units of competency are commonly referred to as the training standards for registered training organisations (RTOs) to prepare, deliver and assess competence for apprentices and trainees.

Neil said ASA is in the process of editing over 600 existing training standards into a revised streamlined format where units of competency will be much easier to understand.

All the current AUR automotive qualifications and training standards are in the process of transition from AUR05 (2005) training package to the new AUR training package which RTOs can deliver immediately, but some will deliver in January 2014. This AUR training package has significantly revised units of competency which are more closely aligned to the specific job role of an automotive diagnostic technician.

Neil mentioned the low levels of language, literacy and numeracy skills within Australian vocational education compared to rest of the world. Future training standards will have the five core Foundation Skills embedded within the

standards which include learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy. In the air conditioning and HVAC training standards, the current 'Install air conditioning' will be replaced with 'Service air conditioning and HVAC systems'. The old unit 'Repair and retrofit air conditioning systems' has been split into two new units 'Diagnose and repair air conditioning and HVAC systems' and 'Retrofit and modify air conditioning and HVAC systems'. On successful completion of these three units the Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) will issue the trainee a refrigerant handling licence permitting them to work on automotive air conditioning and HVAC systems. The install and overhaul air conditioning systems units have been edited so they also reflect the job role and can be obtained as an extension to the ARC licence for general service and repair operations.

There is also a new training standard for the recovery of vehicle refrigerants titled 'Recover vehicle refrigerants' and this applies to end of life vehicles where their refrigerant is recovered and appropriately disposed of or reclaimed. Service and repairs to contemporary air conditioning and HVAC systems that are now an integral part of light, heavy vehicle, agriculture and mining equipment are far more complex systems as they are monitored and controlled via the vehicle data bus network and most often communicate through the vehicle's body control module.

The new Holden VF Commodore has its HVAC system communicating on two bus networks with the compressor, TX valve and fan motor operation on a low speed Can-bus while the driver, passenger console control buttons on a single wire Lin-bus with the body control module as the control gateway module. That means a simple problem where the compressor clutch is not pulling in may be a problem within the vehicle's data bus communications network. A diagnostic scan tool provides only a guide to the service technician for further diagnostic procedures.

Many levels of diagnostic problem solving are therefore required for technicians to be able to efficiently and effectively repair complex faults within contemporary vehicles. Now more than ever the future for diagnostic master technicians is to have a greater understanding of vehicle networking systems, diverse mechanical and electrical underpinning knowledge combined with the highest level of diagnostic experience.

Contact Neil Hunichen via email nhunichen@autoskillsaustralia.com.au or by phone (03) 8610 2511 and ask to be included on the ASA database and receive monthly newsletters and automotive training updates.

Government sides with the aftermarket to force car makers to provide new car data

The Federal Government has endorsed the need for a code of conduct between independent automotive repairers and car manufacturers to allow repairers access to the data they need to service modern cars.

This has been announced by Assistant Treasurer David Bradbury and follows a concerted campaign by the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association, which VASA supports.

This latest move is part of the government's response to an inquiry by the Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory

Council into choice for consumers in the automotive repair market.

The council will monitor industry-led negotiations on a voluntary code of conduct, with a report to government by mid-2014. If industry representatives fail to make substantial progress on the code by the end of this year, the government will start a process to examine other regulatory options, including a mandatory code of conduct.

Consumers and repairers have been frustrated about the lack of access to technical information, with motorists

increasingly forced to take their cars to dealerships for servicing.

'It is a source of great frustration for consumers when they take their car to an independent repairer only to find they cannot complete a service, not because they lack the skills or equipment, but because they cannot access the required data and technical information,' said Mr Bradbury.

'I will also be asking the nation's consumer affairs officials to develop an awareness campaign to educate consumers about their warranty rights.

'Any suggestion by car manufacturers that cars need to be serviced at a licensed dealer to maintain the owner's consumer guarantee rights, is not correct.'



WIRE & GAS 2013

VASA President Ian Stangroome

Reflection

This edition of Hot Air comes off the back of another successful Wire & Gas convention held on the Gold Coast at the very birthplace of VASA 20 years ago.

That gathering, in 1993, of our industry's finest and most dedicated and experienced, rallied and organised to thrash out a plan to guide and represent the mobile sector into the future, in a time which signalled an era heralding the greatest changes and challenges in our industry. If you recall at that time, it had been recently revealed that our most common refrigerant, which we all knew as R12, among other products, was causing the depletion of the ozone layer.

With this realisation, our industry, among other refrigeration and air conditioning sectors, was about to undergo significant change including the phase-out of our most popular refrigerants, introduction of replacement refrigerants, new service and repair procedures, retrofitting and of course licensing and regulation.

The forward thinking of those individuals, who eagerly left the daily grind to assemble themselves at the Marriott all those years ago, saw the formation of VASA. A handful of industry professionals formed the board of directors – Mark Mitchell (President), John Blanchard (Vice President), Glen Watkinson, Ralph Cadman and Paul Robinson.

Since that time, under the guiding hand of these quality individuals and others, VASA has, among other important roles, represented and stood up for the best interests of the mobile air conditioning industry. VASA has committed to providing the highest quality training, education and resources to its members to continue to improve on their professionalism. Members consistently discuss challenges with government and the regulators, hold regular events to bring the industry together and keep it informed, maintain representation in every arena and at every level of interest to the mobile air conditioning sector, and play a major role in the formation of our sector's first ever industry code of practice. In more recent times VASA has also undertaken to represent the interests of the automotive electrical and cooling technicians across Australia and New Zealand.

Without the dedication of those original few, where would our industry be now?

I say reflect on the past, but not dwell. What has changed for you, and what changes do you plan for the future? It is significant to reflect on the past as the lessons learnt provide the wisdom for the future.

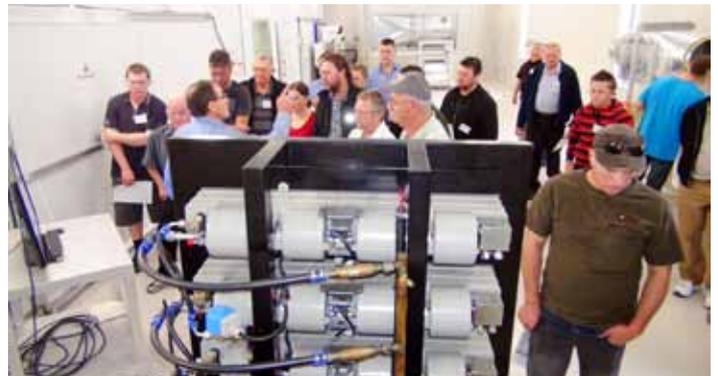
For all those who attended the 20th Anniversary of VASA, I trust you had a worthwhile and rewarding experience and were able to expand both your knowledge and your network.

The VASA board welcomes any feedback you are able to offer, to enable us to further enhance future events and the opportunities they provide. Feedback is vital for us to know what you liked or didn't like, what worked and what didn't and what you want more of and what you prefer to have less of. If you have any new ideas, we always welcome those as well. As in any endeavour in life, 'there is no failure, only feedback'.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge all who did venture up to the Gold Coast to attend the Wire & Gas Convention, to pass on the benefit of your experience to other members, in the hope they will join us at the next Wire & Gas event.

Why not commit to bringing a mate in the trade next time. You know the value you get out of these events, why not share the experience?

I look forward to seeing you at the next Wire & Gas.



A Legend returns to the new VASA Board of Directors

The big surprise at the VASA Annual General Meeting election of the Board of Directors, was that VASA Legend and foundation president Mark Mitchell has thrown his hat into the ring for a one-year term.

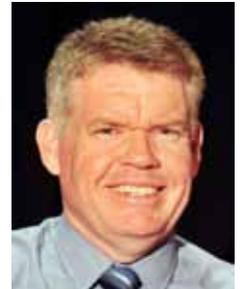
Since 2010, Mark has served as VASA's representative at large, taking VASA's viewpoint into the boardrooms of organisations such as Refrigerant Reclaim Australia and Refrigerants Australia.

Re-elected unopposed to the Board, which will serve for one year, were President Ian Stangroome, Vice-President Brett Meads (who replaces former Vice-President Mark Padwick, who did not seek re-election), honorary treasurer Don Wilesmith (elected to the board late in the last term), New Zealand director Catherine Tocker, and directors Robert Picone and Mark Mitchell.

VASA's full complement of directors is seven, so a vacancy needs to be filled from the membership.

The Board has the power to choose a member to fill that role, but would prefer for a member to indicate a willingness to serve, and that member would be invited to a board meeting to 'test the water' before being formally nominated.

Any member prepared to give it a go, should contact President Ian Stangroome at ian@corjay.com.au



Gary a shining star on the service counter

VASA has presented its 2013 Industry Appreciation Award to a sales representative who is regarded as a shining star in the service sector because of his superior product knowledge and talent for problem solving.

He is Gary Wilkie, manager of the Sunshine Coast (Qld) branch of Ashdown-Ingram, a national wholesaler VASA member.

According to VASA director Brett Meads, who jointly presented the award along with VASA president Ian Stangroome, Gary is a quick learner and a good listener. 'He has a natural talent for problem solving and displays meticulous organisation skills,' Brett said.

In 1987 Gary joined the Ingrams company as a sales representative. Many workshops directly benefitted from Gary's work ethic and accountability.

Around 1998 Ingrams established the Sunshine Coast branch and Gary was the obvious choice for branch manager. It is one of the best performing branches in the country, winning branch-of-the-year awards on a number of occasions.

Gary's Appreciation Award reads, 'In recognition of your achievements, dedicated service and superior knowledge in the aftermarket vehicle repair industry. You are an inspiration to fellow members and an honoured VASA ambassador.'

Gary receives his award from VASA Vice-president Brett Meads (left) and President Ian Stangroome



Kim achieves first networking award

The VASA award ceremony saw the introduction of a new level of award, aimed at recognising those members who understand the value of networking and who make the most of VASA's networking opportunities.

The first member singled out for recognition was Kim Mainwaring, owner of Mainwaring Auto Electrics in Devonport, Tasmania.

Kim rarely misses out on Wire & Gas and VASA events, and goes out of his way to encourage his own staff and others to attend training workshops wherever they are held.

His award, presented by President Ian Stangroome, reads 'Most Valuable Network Member Award 2013 to Kim Mainwaring, Mainwaring Auto Electrics Pty Ltd, in recognition of your dedication, commitment and support of VASA and the continuous improvement of yourself and your staff in accessing VASA training and networking opportunities.'



Newton ends 20 years with VASA's top gong

VASA has honoured its former CEO and communications consultant with its Legend award, granted only to three others in 20 years. They were VASA founding president Mark Mitchell, VASA pioneer, director and industry representative Mark Padwick and the late Frank Allison of the now defunct IMACA in America, who nurtured VASA in its early years.

Co-presenting the award with President Ian Stangroome, Mark Mitchell told the audience that while Ken had always been a paid servant of VASA, the organisation may never have got off the ground without his enthusiasm and corporate guidance, not to mention his ability to very quickly put very readable submissions, news releases, websites and newsletters together with apparent ease and accuracy.



Mark said Ken had written almost every word in every edition of Hot Air, and had fought VASA's many fights using only his typewriter and media knowledge. He read out some of the classic story headings from years past, which captured the imagination of readers and guaranteed the story would be read.

His award reads: *In recognition of your dedication, guidance and loyal commitment to VASA and its members. Through your unparalleled skills as an*

influential communicator, you have positioned VASA members as a group of highly respected professionals.

In thanking VASA for the honour, Ken, who finished his 20 year tenure with the company at the end of Wire & Gas, said that he valued the many friendships he had made within the membership.

He said VASA was lucky to have so many dedicated stalwarts who stood by their network through thick and thin.

Some of Ken Newton's provocative Hot Air headlines which kept VASA in the headlines



Tributes to past directors

VASA President Ian Stangroome has paid tribute to three former directors who had either resigned or not sought re-election.

'Jeff Smit resigned from the board in February, and we also lost the dedicated services of Jeff's wife Wendy, who performed the VASA bookkeeping and secretariat duties for a number of years. Jeff served on the board for six years and brought with him much experience and energy.

As those of you who know him will agree, Jeff's technical and business acumen is to be admired. Jeff and Wendy's valuable contribution to the VASA board and its membership will be greatly missed,' Ian said.

'In April, Deyan Barrie resigned from the board, and like Jeff, is a well-respected fellow technician and VASA member who has offered his guidance and leadership to the industry over many years. VASA



and the broader industry have benefitted greatly from Deyan's commitment to the industry.

'VASA also acknowledges the work of Mark Padwick who did not seek renomination to the board. Mark did tender his resignation prior to the 2012 AGM, but fortunately we were able to convince him to remain on the board for another term. Mark has

had 18 years experience with VASA, 14 of those as a board member, five as president and the remaining years till 2013 as vice-president.

'Mark represented VASA on the Australian Refrigeration Council as chairman for four years. He was awarded VASA Legend status in 2012, and lived up to that accolade,' Ian added.

Move to maintain safe air conditioning environment

The combined moves by professional associations to ensure flammable refrigerants are not used in applications for which they were not designed or approved are gaining some traction after more than 20 years of bringing the safety and incompatibility issue to the notice of authorities.

The VASA forum on the Gold Coast in June was told of the positive moves being made to control the infiltration of flammable refrigerants promoted as drop-in replacements and the very poor work practices which may accompany their use.

DuPont's John McCormack commented that the main problem with the HC regulations, which do exist in most states, is that the regulations are not being enforced. As a result of lobbying by VASA and kindred organisations, the politicians have got the message, and both sides of politics are working towards tightening up the regulations and working with industry to keep the workplace and the car occupants safe.

VASA President Ian Stangroome serves on a special Refrigerants Australia committee working on

this problem, and he told the forum that the industry was gaining traction and the new automotive air conditioning code of practice is also being worked on currently.

He added that the industry was gradually driving enforcement of the regulations which already exist in most jurisdictions.

Michael Bennett from Refrigerant Reclaim Australia commented that it would take a budget of several million dollars for the extra inspectors to enforce workplace health and safety regulations and take people to court.

Ian Stangroome summed it up with, 'Car makers have had 20 years to adopt HC, but not one car maker has done it.'

In March 2013, Ian was part of a delegation of refrigeration and air conditioning industry representatives who met in Canberra with Senator Don Farrell, Minister for Science and Research to push their case for government action to stem the prolific marketing of flammable refrigerants as a drop-in replacement in refrigeration and air conditioning equipment for which it was not originally designed or approved.

VASA specialists get top treatment at restricted test centres

For the second year in a row, members of VASA were given privileged access to a leading Australian test centre which is not normally open to everyone.

In 2012 in Geelong, VASA became the first network of air conditioning specialists and auto electricians to be given access to the high security ACART environmental wind tunnel testing facility at the Ford proving ground.

This year, VASA became the first network of technicians to be given access to Australia's latest state of the art test facility, the SuperCool HVAC and Refrigeration Test Centre at Ormeau in Queensland.

SuperCool made its training rooms available for top level training by Australia's leading mobile air conditioning expert, Grant Hand, as well as an exclusive training session by Carrier Transicold leading transport refrigeration expert Mick Morley, from the UK.

SuperCool managing director Mark Mitchell said the test centre would play a significant role in future training programs for organisations like VASA and one of his aims was to promote the centre as a top training facility in HVAC and transport refrigeration.

Coupled with the DuPont presentation to the VASA delegates was another first, the country's first working demonstration system operating on Opteon, the brand given to the new HFO-1234yf refrigerant.

A small truck or mini-bus air conditioning system rigged up in a test room at SuperCool was charged from the first cylinder of the new refrigerant to be imported into Australia by DuPont.



Wire & Gas 2013 online

Training presentations, photographs and VASA's 20th anniversary video are available for viewing and download at the official Wire & Gas 2013 portal on the VASA website.

Presentations delivered by Jack Stepanian (Electrical and Electronic Diagnostics for Vehicle Air Conditioning) and Geoff Mutton (The Secrets of Effective Sales and Cashflow Management) are

available exclusively to members, but for a limited time only.

Due to copyright issues, presentations from Grant Hand and Mick Morley (Carrier) will not be available online. However we do have a limited number of Grant's workbooks available in hard copy. If you would like one, please email your request to admin@vasa.org.au

Also featured on the Wire & Gas 2013 portal are photographs from each training session, the

AGM and the Anniversary Dinner. Members can download these in high resolution.

Go to www.vasa.org.au/members-section/wire-and-gas-2013/

You will need to login to access the members' section. Use your member number as your login, and the first four letters of your suburb as your password.

Any problems, please call us on **1300 661 972**.