

Symposium 2018

Exceeding all expectations

WE REPORT ON THE MOBILITY, TECHNOLOGY AND SAFETY SYMPOSIUM RECENTLY HELD IN MELBOURNE. WE WERE THRILLED BY THE LEVEL OF INTEREST AND ENGAGEMENT IN THIS CUTTING-EDGE EVENT.



Ian Christensen addresses the delegates.

The symposium kicked off in style as delegates from around the country gathered for the what was a first of its kind in Australia. Initially mingling with each other and absorbing the impressive displays, demonstrations and information from our sponsors, delegates could sense that something special was in the wind.

In the morning session, key note speaker, Ian Christensen, Managing Director - iMOVE Australia, got the ball rolling by painting the big picture as he outlined the major transport and mobility trends that are impacting our industry. Initially, many in the audience wondered where Ian was going, but as the presentation unfolded, it was clear he was setting the scene for what was to become a riveting day.

iMOVE is working on three distinct, but inter-related projects:

- Stakeholders involved in the



Giles Wallis.

movement of people, predominately the public transport sector and their suppliers, with a focus on improving the journey experience.

- Stakeholders involved in the movement of goods, such as freight companies, large retailers and

delivery services, focussing on the efficiency and reliability of their operations and their supply chains.

- Stakeholders who manage the road and rail networks that are used by the first two groups, whose challenge is to cope with the demand for mobility from a strongly growing population.

Christensen stated that the biggest single mobility challenge is the growing congestion issue in our major cities. He highlighted the cost to our economy and indicated that iMOVE has been given a ten-year mandate to work on solutions to this critical issue. As he said, there are no quick-fixes or easy answers, and building more roads is not the answer, particularly with the rate of population growth in Australia.

Some of the solutions may include: car sharing, ride sharing and multi-modal options, many of which

have become possible on the back the latest technology. However, one of the major impediments is the acceptance of shared mobility solutions, although we are seeing a generational shift towards greater acceptance of “mobility as a service”, or MaaS, as it is more commonly known.

The presentation was the precursor to the first discussion panel, where Christensen was joined by Geoff Gwilym, Executive Director VACC, Mario Dimovski, Managing Director, Tradiebot Industries and Samantha Cockfield, Lead Director Road Safety Transport Accident Commission of Victoria.

The discussion commenced with a reflection on the congestion issue and there was universal agreement that it is the biggest single issue impacting our mobility and the efficiency of our transport systems. However, there was much debate about how the technology and greater levels of automated and autonomous vehicles will improve the situation. As Gwilym pointed out, “Even if I had a fully autonomous vehicle tomorrow, I’d still be stuck on the Monash at 10kph.”

Whilst there was no real argument on this point, it was agreed that it is important to separate the congestion issue from the vehicle technology in the short to medium term. It is the advent of the ever-evolving technology that will allow us to find smarter solutions in the longer term.

Dimovski, a pioneer of the use of robotic technology in body shops, implored the audience to embrace the technology and the changes they bring as they will be inevitable. “Our industry will never be the same again,” he said. An interesting twist on the congestion issue is that it has a positive effect on the road toll and Cockfield has no doubt that the recent improvements that have resulted from the TAC’s initiatives will continue with the Towards Zero campaign

It was generally accepted that problems on our roads will continue for some time to come and, in fact, are likely to get worse, or even much worse, before they get better. However, there are some very smart



The Technology Panellists.



The Mobility Panellists.

people across Australia grappling with the problem.

Immediately after the lunch break, delegates were “exposed” to Stu Atkins, an internationally-renowned presenter and self-declared digital entrepreneur who delivered an insightful view of how the connected world in which we live presents us with so many opportunities to market our businesses and enhance our

brands. Atkins informed us about digital trends, such as peer-to-peer disruptors, industry aggregators and the pros and cons of “big data”, together with the importance of social media as a means of connecting with customers. One of the more telling comments was the significance of “word-of-mouth” – the information on the internet about your business. Atkins kept the audience entertained with his



The Bosch Team



Steve O'Brien - iBodyshop



The Capricorn Display

own relaxed and engaging style and summarised the topic by giving the audience a “to-do” list that included understanding the changing demands and being first to move with the new direction of the industry. These, he suggested, would add immediate value.

And, just as the delegates were absorbing this exposé, Giles Wallis, National Marketing Manager – Bosch Automotive Aftermarket Australia, demonstrated why their tagline is “Invented for Life”. The presentation began with an overview of the megatrends, such as an aging population, growing urbanisation, higher energy demands and accelerating connectivity. Wallis illustrated how Bosch was at the forefront of technological advancements in the automotive industry with their collaboration with at least ten global OEMs in the development of their technology.

The main thrust of the presentation was:

- The connected environment, which included an overview of auto

emergency calls, “over-the-air” software updates and predictive diagnostics.

- Electrification, which included the transformation of the powertrain, regenerative braking and thermal efficiency.
- Automation and the importance of calibration to ensure all the systems are functioning correctly, and the use of crash data retrieval.

This really set the scene for the final panel discussion.

Barry Edney – Integrated Commercial Excellence, dialled in from Amsterdam and joined Rob Bartlett – Suncorp, Mark Czvitkovits – I-CAR, Bernadette Gigliotti – Career Education Association of Victoria, and Darren Todd – Bosch, to discuss both today’s and tomorrow’s technology and how it will impact our industry. It was clear that the technology is advancing at such a rate that we can barely keep up, although, according to Todd, compared to what is coming, what we have now is relatively straightforward. Edney provided an

overview of the latest European technology and how it is changing the collision repair industry – surely a sign of things to come.

However, the discussion turned to the challenge of how best to ensure our future technicians have the required skillsets, with Gigliotti making the salient point that the industry is now complex and high-tech, attributes that are highly attractive to the next generation of tradespeople – we, as an industry, need to find a better way to market these benefits. This became a key tenet of the discussion as it is well-recognised that the dearth of new technicians is one of the more difficult challenges faced by our industry. Czvitkovits reinforced that, as the motor vehicle is one of the most “high-tech” pieces of equipment on the planet, training the next generation and re-training the current pool of technicians will be a key success factor for all the industry’s stakeholders. From an insurer’s perspective, Bartlett spoke of their commitment to a safer world and reinforced the importance of suitably-trained technicians using the correct repair procedures.

As the event came to a close, it was clear that it was the sponsors who got behind the initiative, the speakers and panellists who contributed, and the delegates who were in the room who were the real beneficiaries, and these are the people who will make the difference and lead the way in the coming years.

We were really excited to bring this event to the industry and were thrilled by the level of engagement – the conversation has now begun, and we look to build on it as we move forward.