



Stuart Faid

Fix Auto World's Regional Vice President and Head of Business Asia, Australia and New Zealand

NCR: Would you tell us a bit about who you are and where you've come from?

SF: Well, a long story cut short would be that I was raised in the UK although I am, in fact, an Australian citizen thanks to my mum being an Aussie.

I am a car guy through and through, having been in the automotive industry for almost 30 years now. I have spent the last 10 or so years living and working in the Middle East, Africa, China and other parts of Asia. I moved to Australia a little over two years ago with my wife, who is an Australian. After so many years of living in different places, we needed to start putting down roots, so it was time to come "home".

NCR: So, what was it that attracted you to Fix Auto?

SF: I have spent most of my career in and around franchise networks as they are the main distribution channel for the industry. They are commonplace in so many parts of our industry, but I was yet to see a model executed properly in the collision space. I have had numerous smash repair facilities in businesses that I have run over time, so

I knew the challenges of getting those businesses to run well and to run profitably and I saw great potential in the model that Fix Auto brings to the market. Ultimately though, what tipped the balance was having the opportunity to work with the owner of Fix Auto, Steve Leal. He is a repair shop owner turned franchisee, then franchisee turned franchisor. He has built not just

a global business, but a global family. I thought to myself, who doesn't want to be part of a great family? So, I was in.

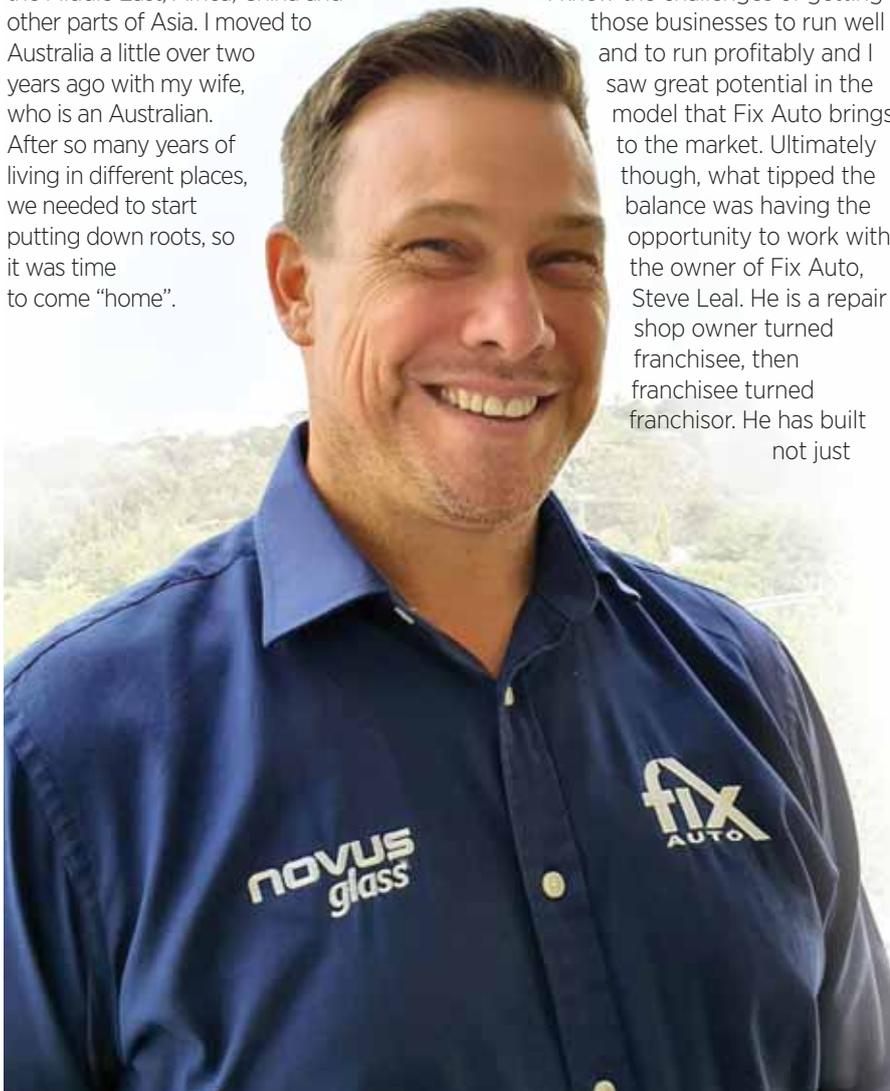
NCR: Tell us about the early years for Fix Auto in Australia.

SF: Honestly, I think we were a little ahead of our time when we launched. The market simply wasn't ready to listen to someone advocating that they needed to change how they operated when they did not see why they needed to right there and then. Shops were busy with lead times of several weeks, and consolidation had not really started to have an impact in the market. People were just hearing that they needed to change but were not feeling the reasons why they should change at that time.

That said, we had a group of what I would call pioneers, our founding franchisees, and they saw how our model could benefit them, how having the support from an outside organisation could help them achieve greater things and thankfully, they got us off the ground. Since then, we have been working to ensure that our model works for our local franchisees. It is important that we are not trying to execute a one-size-fits-all strategy in every country and even in every location. Having established our foundations and knowing what we do makes a difference, we are now well placed to build from that solid base and focus on growth.

NCR: How have things changed in the two years since you were appointed?

SF: Internally, what's changed is that we have gone back to basics in some ways and we work with every franchisee to make sure they are getting the value proposition that they expected from joining the network. We commit to optimising their



performance, increasing profitability, improving their overall effectiveness whether that be in production, fiscal management or local marketing and business development. Our first priority is to make sure that every single one of our franchisees is better off because they are with us.

Externally, the whole landscape has changed. Ironically, when I look at the early launch materials and presentations done by the Fix Auto team to the industry here in Australia back in 2016, they describe today's scenario pretty much exactly as we see it. Consolidation has swept through the independent repairer space, forcing shops that have been around for generations to close, driving others pretty close to the brink of closure, and forcing anyone who remains in the space to have a long hard look at themselves and how they intend to not only stay relevant, but actually survive in the future.

NCR: To what do you attribute the recent growth in the network?

SF: I think that we have a solid base of franchisees who advocate for the brand and what our mission is. That really helps because they can express to prospective franchisees better than anyone why someone should join. They wouldn't do that if we weren't living up to our end of the bargain. I also think that anyone who is serious about staying in the industry, wants to retain their independence, and remains committed to delivering excellence now recognises that this is becoming impossible for a single

standalone location.

Work providers and insurers, need efficiency in the entire supply chain. They cannot administer 150+ repair contracts, or manage the performance outcomes of that same number of individual locations. We have to simplify, streamline and consolidate the process. We, however, don't need to consolidate the number of repairers that deliver that unified outcome. I think, simply stated, the penny has dropped for repairers who now understand what we are all about.

NCR: So, what is the Fix Auto Value Proposition?

SF: To the repairer, we represent the opportunity to retain control of their business but join the world's largest body shop network. We provide the systems, standard operating procedures, processes, performance management and operational support to ensure their business performs at its true potential. We supplement this with access to global purchasing deals

and access to literally a whole world of support through the Fix Family network of repairers. We provide a voice in the market and a seat at the table for every single one of our franchisees, no matter how big or small.

NCR: And what about the Novus Glass business?

SF: Novus is an incredible brand and I am so excited to be part of growing that business throughout Asia and, of course, here in Australia. The founder of Novus Glass was actually the inventor of the windscreen repair way back in 1972. Much like the Fix Network in collision, the business is made up of franchisee owned businesses. Some of those franchisees have been with the brand for 30 years. They are passionate about what they do and are renowned for their personal commitment to delighting customers.

Right now is a very exciting time for us in the glass space. We have been leading the way on repair ratios forever, but with glass prices being so heavily commoditised in the past and glass being actually very cheap to replace, I guess we were a little out of step with the market for a while. Now however, with glass becoming more complex, more expensive and more difficult to replace, suddenly we are back in vogue. We have incredible technology and repair tools that enable us to save the insurance industry and retail customers millions of dollars in replacement costs, not to mention mitigate the huge environmental impact of just needlessly replacing glass. It's a great time to be part of Novus, that's for sure.



One of the more recent franchises, Fix Auto Sunshine.

5 Minutes with ...



Sean Cole
Capricorn Society

When did you join the industry?
1990

What was your first job in the industry?
Marine Technician

What do you do now?
Area Manager, Capricorn Society

What do you like about the industry?
The ever-changing technology

What don't you like about the industry?
I try to stay focused on all the great things

What music do you like?
All Genres mainly Rock

Your Favourite Artist?
Queen

Your favourite food?
Japanese or Korean

Your favourite drink?
Single Malt Whiskey

Your hobbies?
Fishing and Scuba Diving anything on the water really

Who in the world would you most like to meet?
Elon Musk.

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NCR: In 2018 David Lingham outlined some very ambitious growth targets. How are you progressing?

SF: Yes, I saw those when I joined, and they were certainly ambitious – but definitely representative of our potential here.

However, I took a different view on how we should take the business forward and decided that our best course of action was to first ensure our existing network was happy and getting what they signed up for. Then I wanted to know from the work providers what they individually believed would be a solution for them. It is only when you know what your customers want that you can build the solution for them, after all.

Once we knew we could deliver on our promises to our existing franchisees, we then needed to ensure that as we grew, those franchisees could deliver on the promises we make to the industry at large.

We only add people to the “family” that we believe have our values, and we put that above any kind of numerical target we may set internally. We are focused on growth in key areas now, where work providers tell us they have issues. This makes us more focused on where, not how many.

Fortunately, we do not need to grow to a set number by any means or within any time frame. There is no ticking clock, we are privately owned, very well funded, and with a long-term commitment to the country. Luckily, I only need to satisfy one man

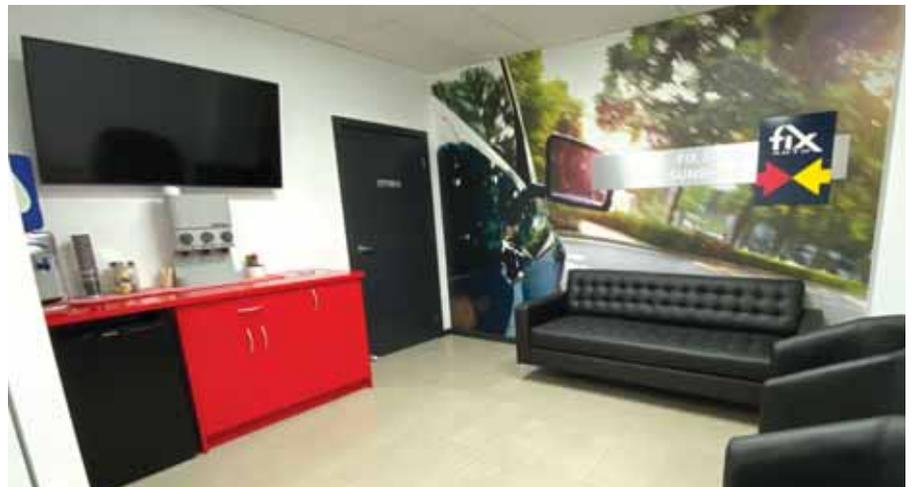
that our strategy is the right one for our franchisees, our customers and our market. That is an enviable position to be in.

NCR: How would you categorise Fix Auto's capabilities in this changing industry?

SF: I see our role as supporting the industry through the changes that are happening. There are lots of stakeholders in this industry and the changes we go through are an outcome of each of those stakeholders executing their own priorities and satisfying their own needs. I believe, as a representative body for a national network of independently owned businesses with skin in the game and invested in the future of smash repair in Australia, we have a responsibility to stand by those repairers. We advocate for fair and reasonable commercial models that focus on driving long term and sustainable relationships based on trust and transparency.

NCR: And a final word for our readers?

SF: These are some of the most challenging times for our industry and they are the times that will define our collective futures. It really is down to us all to ensure we protect the legacy of our industry for generations of family owned businesses in the future. Beyond that, final words should be left to those far better at them than me, so I will borrow some from the author William Arthur Ward: “The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails”.



What a great welcoming facility

BETTERTOGETHER



Aussies know a thing or two about how to take a good thing and make it better.

From slapping a BBQ snag in a piece of bread, to downing an ice cold pint of beer with your Parma, there are some things that just work better together.

At **Fix Auto Australia**, we're all about building partnerships so that your business goes from good to great.

Fix Auto is the world's largest independent repair network, with over 700 locations in 13 countries taking advantage of our systems, resources, training and global buying power, coupled with the strength of leading collision industry brands.

If you're ready to go one better, call the team on **1300 FIX AUTO** or visit **fixauto.com**.



BETTER TOGETHER
FIX AUTO AUSTRALIA & OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS



German Engineering

FIX NETWORK

W O R L D