



McAully's Smash Repair

60 years and still going strong

When a business has been operating in our challenging industry for 60 years, it's certainly worth a look. We meet second-generation and current owner, Graham McAully, who takes a walk down memory lane and shares the secrets of his success.

"My father, John McAully, founded the business in November 1959 at 30 years of age, setting it up initially as a paint shop, although they also did some minor repairs. It didn't take long and the business outgrew the building, so they bought the joinery business next door. It was about this time that I started my spray-painting apprenticeship. We had only five staff back then and everyone did a bit of everything. We really were in an embryonic stage." John McAully has since passed away and Graham now owns and runs the business.

McAully's Smash Repairs earned a reputation over the years for its dedication to painting technology and techniques. "In the early days we used Duco lacquers and synthetic enamels, but

we are always looking for something new. We had the first Glasurit mixing machine in Queensland and subsequently the first Glasurit waterborne system in Southeast Queensland. We have been using the brand exclusively for decades and have great support from the team at BASF."

When I asked what differentiates them from other collision repairers, McAully said: "We specialise in high quality paint jobs for car shows and motoring exhibitions and have clients all over Queensland. It was this dedication to quality that put us on the map. Additionally, for quite some time the staff were 'long termers', and although things have started to change in recent years, we still have many people who have been here for over 30 years, but the younger kids seem to move on more frequently."

We also spoke with Marlene Gehrke who celebrated 35 years at McAully's last month. Gehrke has worked in many areas of the business: spare parts, reception, accounts,

window tinting and is now the Customer Liaison Officer. "I've gone from seeing quotes written by hand to computers, and there have been a lot of changes in the repair industry, especially as it relates to the insurance industry. I've been through many an office remodelling and renovation, plus changes through the panel and paint shops and the ancillary car care products." McAully added: "Marlene is my right-hand woman."

The business has 26 staff, occupies four adjoining blocks and processes 50 to 60 cars per week. It has support from several insurers, many of whom have been around since day one. McAully's also do fleet work, emergency services work and, of course, private work – there are many repeat customers who have been coming to McAully's for generations.

One of the secrets of his success, particularly in the past 10 years, has been the segregation of the heavy hits from the "rapid repair" jobs. "We have quite



Graham McAully in the workshop.



McAully Smash today.

separate and distinctly different areas in the workshop, including a separate costing system that helps us keep control of the mix, which, of course, is crucial.”

Another “secret” is how McAully finds the right equipment for the right tasks and develops relationships with the suppliers. “We have Car-O-Liner benches and pulling equipment, GYS welders, IRT spray booths and the more recent introduction of iBodyshop was one of the most transformational changes in the last decade.”

Keeping up with technology, McAully is fully aware of the challenges facing repairers, particularly when it comes to diagnostics. Almost 50 percent of the repairs they do are sent to the dealership for diagnosis and calibration. “For example, we are a Subaru recommended repairer and this really helps cement our relationship with the brand.”

“One of the things that really gives us a thrill is that one of our apprentices, Reece Haslam, was nominated as one of the Top 10 apprentices in Queensland and was

awarded a certificate of recognition at the recent 2019 MTA Queensland Industry Awards Dinner.”

“I have a really great team of people, and they work very well together,” said McAully. “We pride ourselves on customer satisfaction and we still give a customer feedback form to every repair customer and have a return rate of about 30 percent. This feedback is important to us,

because if it wasn’t for our customers, we wouldn’t be here.”

Whilst McAully is still a young 63-year-old, he still has a great deal to offer the business. His son has taken a different path, so there is no natural successor. “As I keep saying, I really enjoy what I do, the people I work with and the industry to which I have belonged for 49 years. I’m not going anywhere just yet.”



Graham with Marlene Gehrke, Tanieka Russell and Jamee Mullins Bramich.



G360 SUPER FAST SYSTEM.

- ✓ Superfast cut & polish
- ✓ No P3000 sanding
- ✓ Permanent finish
- ✓ For UHS & ceramic

