



# Cranbourne Body Works

## Doing it their way for over three decades

WE MEET KEVIN SLATTERY OF CRANBOURNE BODY WORKS WHO TELLS US WHAT HE DOES, HOW HE DOES IT, AND WHAT STEPS HE'S TAKING TO PREPARE HIMSELF FOR THE INDUSTRY'S INEVITABLE TECHNOLOGICAL FUTURE.

Kevin Slattery did his apprenticeship at Armstrong's in Dandenong in the early 1980s and became a panel beater by trade. He was exposed to some rather old-fashioned thinking and ways of doing things, so in 1988, at the age of 23 he bought Cranbourne Body Works, which at the time was a business that bought, repaired and sold damaged cars from a site "off the beaten track" in Cranbourne. He was young, didn't have a great deal of money, but always knew that he wanted to do things his way. Fast forward to 2010 and Kevin moved the business to a new facility on the main highway, where he's been ever since. Pre-COVID-19, the business was repairing 25-30 cars per week, predominantly heavy hits.

Over the years he's seen the industry change and is particularly concerned about some of the consolidators. "I just don't see how they can deliver what we deliver at the rates they charge, especially when it comes to the heavy hits." Kevin says that when he has interviewed panel beaters from that environment over the years, they just don't have the depth of knowledge to do what they do at Cranbourne Body Works, especially when it comes to interpreting and executing the manufacturers' approved repair procedures. Interestingly, Kevin recommends taking photos every step of the way when doing more complex repairs as verification that you have

done the job safely and properly.

Kevin currently has GM Holden and Chevrolet Certified Repairer status and is looking forward to seeing how the GM Repair Network will evolve in light of the recent changes at GM Holden. Regarding the growing influence of OEMs, he expects that when the time is right and the opportunities arise, Cranbourne Body Works is likely to pursue other manufacturer certifications.

The business has established solid relationships with insurers Suncorp, QBE and Youi, although he faces the ongoing challenge of doing things right and making a reasonable return on investment. As the industry evolves, requiring ongoing investment,



Kevin Slattery.

this challenge is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Kevin's wife Nicky has become more involved in the business as it has grown, and although they are not immune to the challenges of attracting and retaining staff, there are several long-term employees in the team of 12 who have been with the business for over a decade, working across admin, parts and spray painting.

Interestingly, Kevin has done a great deal of work with the local schools in the area, promoting the opportunities in the collision repair sector in support of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), which is a practical option for students in years 11 and 12. Notwithstanding the clearly defined career paths available, he has been disappointed by the lack of interest in our industry. In addition, Kevin is frustrated with the high attrition rate for those that do start an apprenticeship, even though he has worked with VACC in providing all the necessary support. One of the key challenges, Kevin believes, is that trades are competing with university for the high school students looking to decide where they want to take their careers.

We turn our attention to the VACC, and Kevin explains that they have been a member "forever". "We actually won the inaugural VACC Best Small Business and Best Body Repairer in 2016, to go with our Casey

Cardinia Business Award in 2015. In 2019 we were also recognised by VACC as Partner in Developing the Talent of Tomorrow." Cranbourne Body Works is also I-CAR Gold Certified, which is further recognition of their commitment to excellence.

Kevin is enthusiastic about the companies that are Cranbourne Body Works' key supplier partners and have been with him on his journey. "PPG has been our paint supplier for the past five years and I've been so impressed with virtually everything they do. The colour is brilliant, the technical support is faultless, and their attitude is exceptional. I won't be leaving PPG for a long, long, long, long time."

Everywhere you look in the body shop there are Car-O-Liner benches and, in Kevin's own words, "it's the stuff that works. Sure, they cost a bit more, but quality always does. They are so easy to use and the service and support is fantastic."

Kevin is committed to staying on top of things, especially the quoting system, as he wants to ensure he gets paid for everything he does. He also operates iBodyshop, which he says is unquestionably the best cloud-based estimating and body shop management system available.

As one of the more progressive collision repairers, Kevin is looking to stay ahead of the "technological tsunami" that is impacting our

industry. As an I-CAR Gold Class repairer, Cranbourne Body Works has invested heavily in technical training. However, he believes that the biggest risk is related to diagnostics and calibration, which he currently outsources to the local dealer. "Not unlike many repairers, we initially used a scan tool to clear dash fault code indicator lights following the repair. However, we soon realised that this is not sufficient as we became aware that not every fault code results in a dash indicator light. So, we found ourselves relying on the dealers."

However, as the director of Cranbourne Body Works, Kevin knows that ultimately, he is accountable for the safe and proper repair of the vehicle and intends to bring the process under his own roof. He has turned to the DrivePro Elite diagnostic system by OpusIVS. Opus' systems do far more than identify and treat the symptoms – they get to the root cause.

With access to a factory trained technician for the vehicle being repaired, Kevin can send in the full vehicle report and, not only will he receive a response regarding what the vehicle repair requires for insurance purposes, he will also receive diagnostic technical information for faults that occurred pre-collision. He sees this as an opportunity to add value for the vehicle owner whilst the car is in for the collision damage repair.



Uploading images in real time.



The Opus IVS ADAS targets.

# 5 Minutes with ...



**John Digiorgio**  
SAPE Group

**When did you join the industry?**  
November 2020

**What was your first job in the industry?**  
Business Development Manager – NSW, Equipment Division

**What do you do now?**  
Business Development Manager – NSW, Equipment Division and I'm looking forward to getting out there, meeting everyone, and making sure everyone knows I'm here to help when it comes to anything equipment related.

**What do you like about the industry?**  
I like that it's an industry I have a genuine interest in and can relate to. Also, all the different characters and how down to earth everyone is.

**What don't you like about the industry?**  
That I'll be seeing a lot of nice cars that I can't have.

**What music do you like?**  
I'm all about diversity

**Your Favourite Artist?**  
Jay Z

**Your favourite food?**  
American BBQ, Italian, Greek ... the list is too long

**Your favourite drink?**  
Beer, Whiskey

**Your hobbies?**  
Getting the meat smoker on, weekends away at the family farm, going for a random drive, watching car reviews, playing soccer, restoring cars .....

**Who in the world would you most like to meet?**  
Mario Balotelli



## TALKING SHOP

Of course, this ensures the vehicle is fault-free and safe for the road.

"My initial thoughts are that I am quite excited about the whole process and keen to get the entire calibration system into the business. I like what I see so far, and I think we have the right people already in the business to make the most of DrivePro. I am very excited about having a technician at the other end of the line to ensure we get it right. The way I see it is that Opus IVS is providing peace of mind for the collision repair industry."

We discuss what differentiates Cranbourne Body Works. Kevin sums it up as a commitment to excellence. "Excellence in the quality of the repair, excellence in customer service and an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement – that's one of the key drivers behind our interest in DrivePro. We're always looking to keep ahead of the game."

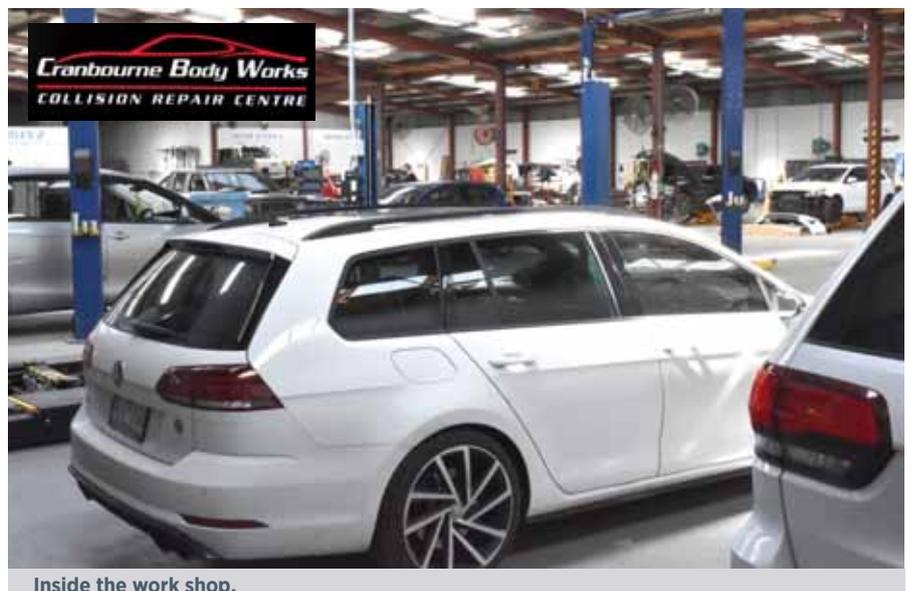
Kevin was keen to make a short comment on the impact of COVID-19 on his business over the past six months. He says it has been frustrating. "Although we were fortunate to have a good pipeline of work, that has well and truly dried up, but critical and essential vehicle work has allowed us to keep operating, albeit at a significantly reduced capacity. It's been the stop-start nature of the recovery that's been difficult to manage, and I'd hate to have been

highly leveraged when the coronavirus hit. What we were able to do was get all the preventive maintenance and repairs done so that when things get back to normal, we are ready to go."

As Kevin looks ahead, he sees the dynamic industry continuing to change and it really gets him excited about the future. "I'm still fit, strong and young at heart, and will always be looking for something to do. The next generation of technologically advanced vehicles will provide the stimulus that will keep both me and Cranbourne Body Works going for many years to come."



**Identifying fault codes with Drive Pro Elite**



**Inside the work shop.**

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