



Match makers

The 2021 PPG Colour Matching Competition



FOLLOWING THE CANCELLATION OF THE PPG COLOUR MATCHING COMPETITION FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER IN 2020, THE ORGANISING TEAM WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE A TRIUMPHANT RETURN IN 2021. HERE IS THE STORY SO FAR.

As the global pandemic began to take hold in early 2020, events of all kinds became casualties. One of them was the PPG Colour Matching Competition – the PPG organising team made the difficult decision to cancel for the first time in its 30-odd year history. The complexity of working around COVID-19 containment measures to organise

regional and state competitions and then a grand finale proved too much. Despite the forced axing of the long-running event, measures were put in place to keep eligible apprentice spray painters engaged, including a special Colour Matching Competition Facebook group that provided a constant flow of thought-provoking content.

Facing up to the challenges

It would have been easy for the PPG organising team to say that a return in 2021 was, once again, just too hard. However, there was a quiet determination to figure out a way to make the competition happen, while keeping it as close to normal as possible. The fact everyone jumped on board helped make the plans a reality, according to Chelsea Hilsberg, Marketing Assistant and Graphic Designer from PPG's Refinish Marketing team based at the company's Clayton, Melbourne headquarters.

“Our region wide network of PPG training managers, as well as the Clayton Colour Laboratory team, play a key role, so we engaged them early by scheduling more meetings than usual. The collaboration between the entire internal team has been particularly good this year and, at



New South Wales.



South Australia.

each planning step, it allowed us to get good feedback on the direction we were going,” said Hilsberg.

As the organising team navigated its way through the realities of today’s COVID-19 climate, it took some lateral thinking and a dose of luck, according to Marissa Tasios, PPG Refinish Marketing Assistant.

“Uncertainty was the biggest challenge! With lockdowns and different regulations in each Australian state and in New Zealand, you never quite knew what you were going to get at any given time. For example, New Zealand, WA and SA were all able to complete their state competitions early in the process, whereas the ACT and NSW squeezed in just before their lockdowns kicked in. When it came to Tasmania, none of the PPG team were able to travel, so TAFE staff took it on and made the competition happen with Richard Harvey, PPG Refinish Colour Technologist, monitoring the event via video link. However, we currently find ourselves in unknown territory in Victoria due to the ongoing lockdown situation in that state,” said Tasios.

“It was similar for the Northern Territory where the team at Charles Darwin TAFE were very flexible and resourceful in getting it done. One of the unusual logistical challenges was to do with the set of SATA spray guns that are used for each competition. Because they couldn’t travel with a PPG team member to each event, it sometimes required military precision to ship them to the next competition on time.”

Fitting finale

With no chance of bringing the state winners together for a grand finale, it’s the winner’s spray out cards that will make the journey to PPG’s Clayton Colour Laboratory for judging. Rather than one spray-out card for each of their final colours (a solid colour and a metallic/pearl), contestants will prepare two. While one will remain in the state records, the other will be sent to Clayton where it will be “blind” assessed by a panel of judges, so they won’t know which card is from which state. This made designing a suitable finale a real priority.

“Knowing we couldn’t fly everyone to one place for a final, we wanted to make it as exciting as possible. We are going to use a special guest presenter to announce this year’s National Colour Matching Champion and placegetters utilising the latest online video premiere facility,” said Hilsberg.

Along with the SATAjet X 5500 spray gun that they each received for

winning their state competition, our winner, and second and third place in the finale also win some great prizes, which can include Mirka tools, additional SATA spray equipment, gaming consoles, gift cards, and so on. PPG plans to have the prizes delivered to their workplace by the local PPG team.

“I hope we don’t have to go through this again next year, but the organising team has proven once again that the PPG team around the country can rise to the challenge,” concluded Hilsberg.

Editor: What a great response to one of the most challenging situations the industry has ever had to deal with. It’s a great credit to the PPG Marketing Team and their entire national network of technicians and partners around the country – congratulations! We look forward to bringing you the winners when the Victorian event has been completed and the final judging takes place at the grand finale.



NT-winner Mitchell Elliott.



ACT winner - Carl Burog.



New Zealand.



Western Australia.