



collision REPAIR expo

FOLLOWING A THREE-YEAR HIATUS, THE AAAA HOSTED THE 2022 AUSTRALIAN AUTO AFTERMARKET EXPO IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SAPE GROUP-SPONSORED COLLISION REPAIR EXPO AT THE MELBOURNE CONVENTION AND ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE IN APRIL.

Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association CEO Stuart Charity and Senator Deborah O'Neill cut the ribbon and officially opened both expos. Charity declared that it was great to be back and that he was looking forward to the biggest industry event since 2019.

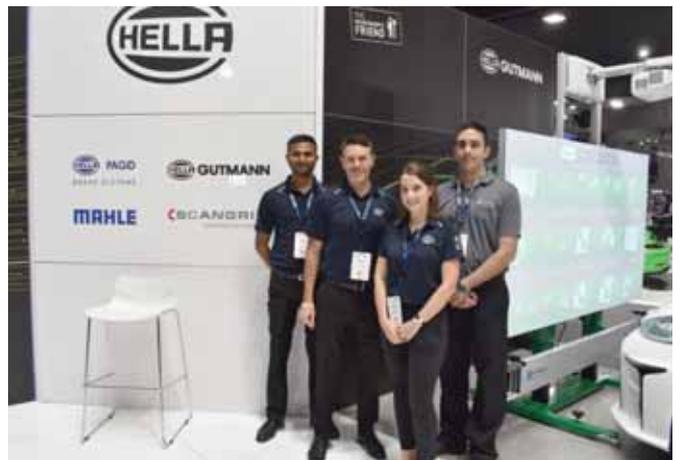
As it turned out, the atmosphere was just fantastic as people from all facets of the industry were able to reconnect once again – and it really showed. Getting the numbers through the door was always going to be a challenge with the pandemic still among us, but it was

clear that we are all learning to live with it and will do so in whatever form it may take in the coming months and years. However, getting the event up and running was a massive achievement by Charity and his team.

The event was an integrated trade



Let the games begin.



The Hella Gutmann Team.



Three generations at SAPE.



Major Sponsor, The SAPE Group.



show, live demonstrations and a series of thought-provoking seminars that ran seamlessly, including a Friday evening session. At this year's Expo, some of the changes were that all seminars were held on the show floor, and the AAAA introduced its all-new Workshop of the Future Pavilion. This took the education program to a new level, with daily sessions to help fast-track the automotive industry's understanding of, and transition to, servicing and repairing the future generation of vehicles, covering the ICE and EV car parc.

The collision industry seminar series, sponsored by I-CAR, included a hand-picked selection of respected industry experts who demonstrated their practical knowledge on the topics that matter most to the

industry. These engaging sessions appealed to workshop owners and managers looking for a suite of tools to gain an edge in business, through

to automotive technicians looking to upskill their knowledge and further their careers.

I-CAR Australia's chief operating



Fix Auto and Novus Glass.



All happening at Car-O-Liner.



AAA Radiators all set to go.



Blackline Australasia.



officer Jason Trewin said: “The Expo was a great opportunity for us to reconnect with the industry and to work together more closely as a team. Due to

our activities over the past two years, we found that most visitors were well accustomed to what we do and how we do it. We found that seminar attendees

were well down on pre-registrations, which may well be due to attendees over-committing and then being more selective on the day. However, overall it was great to be back.”

In addition, high-school students were invited to attend the Expo on the Saturday to introduce them to the exciting high-technology world of automotive through a targeted marketing program. However, it was difficult to assess the impact of this initiative during the course of the day.

The Collision Repair Expo continues to evolve, and the industry’s heavy hitters were out in force in 2022, many of them increasing their presence for this year’s event. Led by major sponsor, the SAPE Group – who unveiled their most extensive exhibit ever – Paul McMartin, Director, SAPE,



AAAA Awards Evening.



“Joe and Joe” from AkzoNobel.



It’s all business at DNS Technology.



AMA Group’s ACM Parts Division.



Capricorn was a hive of activity.

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said: "We were thrilled to once again take the leading position at the Expo as we grow and develop with the dynamic and evolving industry. Although the trade visitor numbers have yet to be released, from our perspective, the Expo was excellent as there was a real sense of excitement and genuine interest in what we had to offer. The visitors we spoke with were all keen to invest in their businesses and return to growth in 2022."

Once again, Mark Williams' Lowbake Australia provided a fully functional spray booth that ran across all three days, providing coatings and ancillary suppliers the opportunity to demonstrate their latest product innovations, with all demonstrations live-streamed onto the big screen. Mark and his team did an exceptional job.

We at the National Collision Repairer ran a lucky draw to win "Backdrift", an amazing sculpture of a front guard by industry artist and

sculptor Marc Vellekoop. The draw was live-streamed on Saturday afternoon, and the winner was Andrew Minns, formerly of Subaru



Our own display.



PPG and Mirka.



Team U-POL.



Team Milwaukee.



Saint Gobain's Norton and Farécla brands.



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Australia. Andrew said he was thrilled to win the panel and that it would take pride of place in his new office.

Concurrent with the expos, the Australian Auto Aftermarket Excellence Awards returned in spectacular fashion at the aftermarket industry's night of nights to recognise excellence and celebrate the industry. Stuart Charity said: "I am so incredibly proud of the resilience of our industry to achieve success through unprecedented times, including the pandemic and recent floods. To see so many individuals and companies awarded for their manufacturing, marketing success, and industry contributions with these coveted awards was a sight to behold. I'd like to congratulate all of the award winners, particularly our two Hall of

Fame inductees, David Fraser, Group CEO Capricorn Society, and Anthony Kittel, managing director of REDARC, for their distinguished and successful careers in the industry."

Melbourne was buzzing as the Formula 1 Grand Prix was also being held on the same weekend, and the exhibitors wanted to make a statement that they were back bigger and better than ever, and that was clearly the case. However, it has yet to be seen how the best ever Grand Prix crowd impacted the numbers at the Expo, as the final attendance figures are yet to be released. Anecdotally, the message from the show floor was mixed, but let's wait and see.

Appropriately we leave the final word to AAAA CEO Stuart Charity, who was predictably upbeat: "The

Auto Aftermarket and Collision Repair Expo exceeded our expectations as there was an incredible buzz across the Expo having the industry back together. The quality and variety of exhibitors was exceptional, and to see the enthusiasm of trade visitors networking face-to-face was truly appreciated by all. The feedback about the Expo has been overwhelmingly positive from exhibitors and visitors."

Editor: From our perspective, the Expo was a great opportunity to reconnect with the industry, our current clients, some of our former colleagues and, of course, old friends in an atmosphere where competitive tension was left at the door, and everyone was there for the greater good of the industry.



I-CAR still full of energy on day three.



The new team at CoolDrive.



Le'Mix and Roberlo brands.



Stia Abrasives.