

AUTO INDUSTRY IS GEARING UP FOR EV'S

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA), together with research partners Fifth Quadrant, has released its Australia-first 2023 Future Readiness Index research.

This is the first ever research of its type, commissioned to determine if Australian workshops are effectively preparing for upcoming market changes and to measure their stance on technological advancements.

“As an industry, we have been dealing with assumptions around our EV readiness, misunderstandings about attitudes towards EVs, and questions around what kind of regulation or oversight is needed,” AAAA Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, Lesley Yates, said.

“What this research shows is that a large portion of our industry’s workshops, fifty percent in fact, are either already EV-ready (one in 10) or already investing heavily in future readiness, prioritising skills and equipment to create a safe and productive working environment.

“In fact, many of these workshops are already successfully and safely servicing and repairing EV and hybrid vehicles, and have been doing so for over a decade.

“And importantly, the majority of those that aren’t actively investing right now (39 percent) are not ‘EV rejectors,’ instead they are simply waiting until it makes more commercial sense in their specific local markets to make such investments, which is completely understandable given that current trend rates expect Australia’s national fleet will still be comprised of 90 percent ICE vehicles in 2030, even if sales of EVs in 2030 reach as high as 50 percent.

“Together this sees 50 percent of our market either Future Ready or actively preparing, and a further 39 percent open

to upskilling and investing in equipment for newer models when their local market demands it.

“Overall, what we can take away from this is that when it comes to the topic of EV readiness, the majority of our workshops are tuned into what is coming and getting ready, so consumers and government can trust that automotive workshops are preparing for the future.”

Lesley says the findings of this research show that the automotive industry is ready to be, and in a lot of cases already is, the trusted partner for EV and hybrid owners Australia-wide.

“We have the knowledge, the skills, the equipment, and a proven track record; and this is all only going to increase as more and more workshops invest in this area,” Lesley said.

“Before now, no one had a sense for how much workshops were gearing up for EV, as no one had this data. But now we do, and it proves what we have been saying – we are a sophisticated industry, one that is highly skilled, equipped and future-focused.

“It is clear automotive technicians are the right choice when it comes to who should be servicing and repairing EVs and not only are we ready, but we are also only going to become increasingly more so.

“What this means is while we welcome government assistance and there are certainly areas the AAAA wants to work on with our government partners, any calls for introducing regulation on something we are already doing safely and successfully, and any pushes for members of other industries (such as electricians) to be tasked with servicing and repairing cars, are really not required.

“It also means any judgements of the auto industry as being behind the times or out of touch with what is coming is an unwarranted stereotype.

“Our industry, our workshops and their technicians are experts in their field, constantly learning and investing in skills and tools, and ideally placed to continue servicing EVs and hybrids, as they have been for many years.”

Of course, no industry is homogenous and Australia’s car parc is deeply varied, so it good news also that while there is a large focus on EVs and hybrid readiness, some workshops also remain committed and focused on ICE (Internal Combustion Engine) servicing and repair, ensuring all customers can access expert servicing and repair for their car, no matter what it is.

“While EVs and hybrids are certainly increasing in their numbers in Australia, there is still a massive number of ICE vehicles in our car parc and that will continue to be the case for quite some time,” Lesley said.

“Therefore, it is important workshops continue to service these vehicles, and I am pleased to report many of our workshops are still placing a focus on the safety and emissions of our existing ICE vehicles at the same time as they are preparing for the future.”

The Future Readiness Index has been constructed as a repeatable index using 36 unique data points, which have been categorised into four thematic areas (business management, tools, EVs, and skills). Based on their responses, workshops received a score of up to 25 points in each of these, giving them an overall score out of 100.

Based on the scores, four groups were identified, talking to their overall mindset in terms of the future of their workshop and willingness to invest in future trends and technologies.

The online survey was conducted across July and August 2023, surveying automotive workshop decision makers spanning a range of different business sizes amongst not only AAAA members but also the wider automotive industry across the country.

For more data or more information visit www.aaaa.com.au

