



Society of Automotive Engineers Australasia

Suite B, Level 2
70 Dorcas Street
Southbank Victoria
Australia 3051
T: 61 3 9696 5190
F: 61 3 9696 5865
www.sae-a.com.au
ABN: 95 004 248 604

Media Release - 18 October 2011

New SAE-A president

The Society of Automotive Engineers - Australasia (SAE-A) has elected automotive engineering consultant Bill Malkoutzis to the role of president.

On accepting the SAE-A presidency, Bill Malkoutzis said his first task is to recognise the visionary leadership and diligent commitment of immediate past president Patrick Ross. "During his two years as president Patrick Ross led the Society through a very challenging period resulting from major changes in our industry," said Bill Malkoutzis.

Founded in 1927, the Society remains a member driven not for profit organisation representing automotive engineering professionals. SAE-A grew rapidly with the expansion of vehicle production in Australia mid last century. Then Australia hosted manufacturing facilities for the BMC, Chrysler, Ford, Holden, Nissan, Toyota brands plus a range of trucks, and many of their component suppliers.

Bill Malkoutzis said that years ago locally produced vehicles accounted for more than 80% of sales. "Now local vehicle manufacturing has declined sharply as Australian consumers select almost 80% of their purchases from a range of over 50 imported models of cars and light trucks. The result is that Society members have endured more than 50 years of plant closures and job losses," he said.

"Members continue to face the challenging scenario of reduced manning levels for engineers in the automotive industry, on both the manufacturing and supplier side, as sales of imported vehicles increase.

"Similarly, as the engineering in vehicles becomes more sophisticated, they become more reliable. Service intervals increase and maintenance and repair work becomes more modularised. So demand for automotive service and repair technicians is declining," he said.

With work experience at two international companies and more recently as an independent consultant, Bill Malkoutzis is familiar with the wide range of needs of SAE-A members. He worked in Australia and in the USA for Ford Motor Company for 13 years and for 13 years at PBR, and has a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering degree.

Specialist needs for specialist members

Bill Malkoutzis said the dramatic changes faced by members have also affected SAE-A operations and, like all industry stakeholders, the Society must adapt to changes in the structure and culture of the industry.

"Today, smaller teams of engineers develop vehicles for Australian buyers. We also have some teams of specialists contributing to global vehicle platforms for the Asian, European, Middle East and USA markets.

"With powerful on-board computers controlling modern vehicles, service technicians need specialist electronics and diagnostics skills.

"While measures have been taken to minimise the impact of industry change on the Society, we must do more to adapt to the new paradigm of reduced membership and fund raising opportunities," he said.

Bill Malkoutzis said that in his term as president he wants the Society to again be the industry platform for debate about engineering excellence in safe and sustainable transport. "We want to reinstate our position as the 'go to' place for information about state of the art technologies to ensure our members are at the leading edge of their professions," he said.

"To meet the needs of our 21st century automotive industry professionals, we will ensure the Society engages more closely with members. We will offer activities and events related directly to their needs for personal and professional development.

"While developing new programs for members, we will continue to deliver the Society's key annual industry events, including the *Automotive Engineering Excellence Awards*, the international *Change by Design Conference* and the engineering education experience in a race car - the international *Formula SAE-A* competition for engineering students," he said.

The 2011 Formula SAE-A competition will be held at Victoria University Werribee Campus near Melbourne from 15 to 18 December with 28 teams competing in 11 events in vehicles powered by RON 98 PULP, Ethanol E85 and electric motors. Host company GM Holden will welcome teams from Australia, Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, and New Zealand.

Photo caption SAE-ABillMalkoutzis.jpg: *Bill Malkoutzis, President of the Society of Automotive Engineers - Australasia.*

(end)

About SAE-A

The Society of Automotive Engineers – Australasia (SAE-A) promotes excellence in automotive engineering and is committed to the protection and betterment of the environment. Its members are engineers, scientists and technicians working across the entire spectrum of the Australasian automotive industry – vehicle and component manufacturers; vehicle service, repair and aftermarket sectors; importers, insurance services, fuel suppliers, government authorities, and students. SAE-A is a Council member of the International Federation of Automotive Engineering Societies, and is linked to SAE-International and the International Pacific Conference on Automotive Engineering.

For further information:

Bill Malkoutzis
SAE-A President
+61 (0)409 439 315

Barry Oosthuizen
SAE-A Editor
+61 (0)413 185 135
editor@sae-a.com.au