

Bulletin

Industry Divisions



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MTAA announces the five panelists that will join Erin Molan

Dear members

You are invited to attend a free online lunchtime forum "From Passion to Panel" organised by the Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) and hosted by the Australian TV and radio presenter, Erin Molan. Please register to attend by clicking on the link below.

From Passion to Panel

Free online lunchtime forum



Grab your lunch and join us for an exciting free virtual event hosted by Australian TV and radio presenter, Erin Molan.

Join the Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) and its federation counterparts to share knowledge, updates and hot topics in the automotive panel repair industry.

Learn about business strategies and leadership models for women in automotive collision from those pioneering change. A panel of passionate and pioneering women will join Erin to discuss:

- Their 'aha' moment that kick-started their collision journey
- How they attract, retain, and lead staff
- The mindset that sets leaders apart and how they prepare the next generation
- How women in leadership can inspire others to achieve greatness.

Who: Anyone interested, working or wanting to know more about the automotive industry
What: An inspiring hour of chat about leadership and resilience
When: 12–1pm Thursday 16 November
Cost: Free

[Register now](#)



Host
Erin Molan
Television and radio sports journalist

Erin Molan is a television and radio sports journalist, known for her work on Sky News, 2Day FM and The Daily Telegraph. Previously she appeared on Channel 9's Wide World of Sports, The NRL Footy Show, and The Sunday Footy Show. She is passionate about politics, national security and foreign affairs, and uses her platform to support several charities and causes. Erin travels Australia sharing her story of persistence and resilience, and considers inspiring and empowering the next generation a genuine privilege and responsibility.



Melisa Rowe
Esperance Smash Repairs (WA)

Melisa is the managing director of Esperance Smash Repairs in Western Australia. As a mother of two adult children, she's mastered the art of juggling many hats. She is passionate about her rural community, small businesses and the automotive industry, and enjoys running a busy automotive panel and refinish business with her husband, David. Melisa recently won the Automotive Women of the year award for Western Australia and received the VERA (Volunteer Employer Recognition Award) in 2022. Having previously won the Esperance Chamber of Commerce Business of the year award in 2017, she was also the chair and on the board of ECCL for several years. She completed the Australian Rural Leadership Program in 2011 and has been involved with the local Future Leadership Program in the past few years. Her passion lies with the next generation of apprentices and wants to empower people to become business owners or managers.



Carly Ruggeri
Euro Panels (Vic)

Carly comes from a small business background, with the body repair sector being a major part of her life for nearly two decades. Carly has found personally and more broadly, the industry not an easy one to navigate. However, she has and continues to rise to the challenge and is fully committed to its future. Her body repair business is based in Geelong, Victoria and, with business partner and brother Jake, has won several awards for their state-of-the-art facility. Carly believes their business culture is also key to their success. Carly has a huge emphasis on further development and advocacy in the automotive industry. She constantly seeks to develop her own skills and support her team in doing the same. Carly's energy and focus goes beyond her own business with her advocacy work, volunteering time to seek meaningful and sustainable changes to a sector that continues to evolve.



Andrea McCarthy
McCarthy Panel Works (Qld)

Andrea is a director at McCarthy Panel Works, with over 25 years' experience in the collision repair industry. Andrea assists her team to guide clients through every stage of their motor vehicle repair, with a better understanding of quality repairs. Throughout her career, Andrea has worked to be a voice amongst organisations who can spark positive change. In 2011, she joined the committee of the National Auto Collision Alliance (NACA), a Motor Trades Association of Queensland (MTAQ) division. In June 2020, she became chair of the division. Her role with MTAQ/NACA coupled with her position on I-CAR Australia's industry advisory board, allows Andrea the opportunity to invoke unique and broader perspectives into this male-dominated industry. She welcomes diversity and has learned to adapt training to suit individual team members. This is one reason why McCarthy won the Small Employer of the Year for Queensland Training in 2023.



Sarah Karavasilias
MPSR Group (NSW)

After completing her HSC, Sarah jumped straight into further study by completing her Bachelor of Arts (majoring in Global Studies) and Bachelor of Laws. Following her graduation, she became an admitted solicitor and subsequently worked as a criminal lawyer for eight years. After having her children, Sarah found herself at a crossroads – continue practicing part-time as a solicitor or look to brighter horizons. In 2022, she decided to use her experience and energy to build the family business by joining the MPSR Group. Situated in the heart of Murrumbidgee, MPSR Group is an award-winning body repair shop, repairing on average 150 damaged vehicles a week, back to their original condition. Sarah holds the role of BDM, in-house counsel, HFI and OHS officer, managing 70 staff members. In her first year, she was recognised for her work and presented with the owner/manager award presented by the Paint & Panel Women in Collision.



Alison Turnbull
Al's Panel Shop (NT)

Alison has been in the automotive repair business for over 30 years and, in that time, has seen many major changes. From the technology and materials used in vehicles, to the change in relationships and dealings between insurance companies and repairers, and changing client expectations, she's seen it all. To keep ahead of the game and make her business more profitable, she had to change her thinking and mentality towards training, staffing and workflow issues. Alison was required to step outside her comfort zone and, 15 years ago, hired her first skilled migrant employee and has never looked back. At the same time, Alison started employing more local apprentices each year to ensure the future of her workforce. Alison actively ensures her staff have the necessary training and is always on the hunt for new products to make the workflow smoother and more efficient.



Kathy Zdravevski LLM (JD)
Industry Policy Advisor