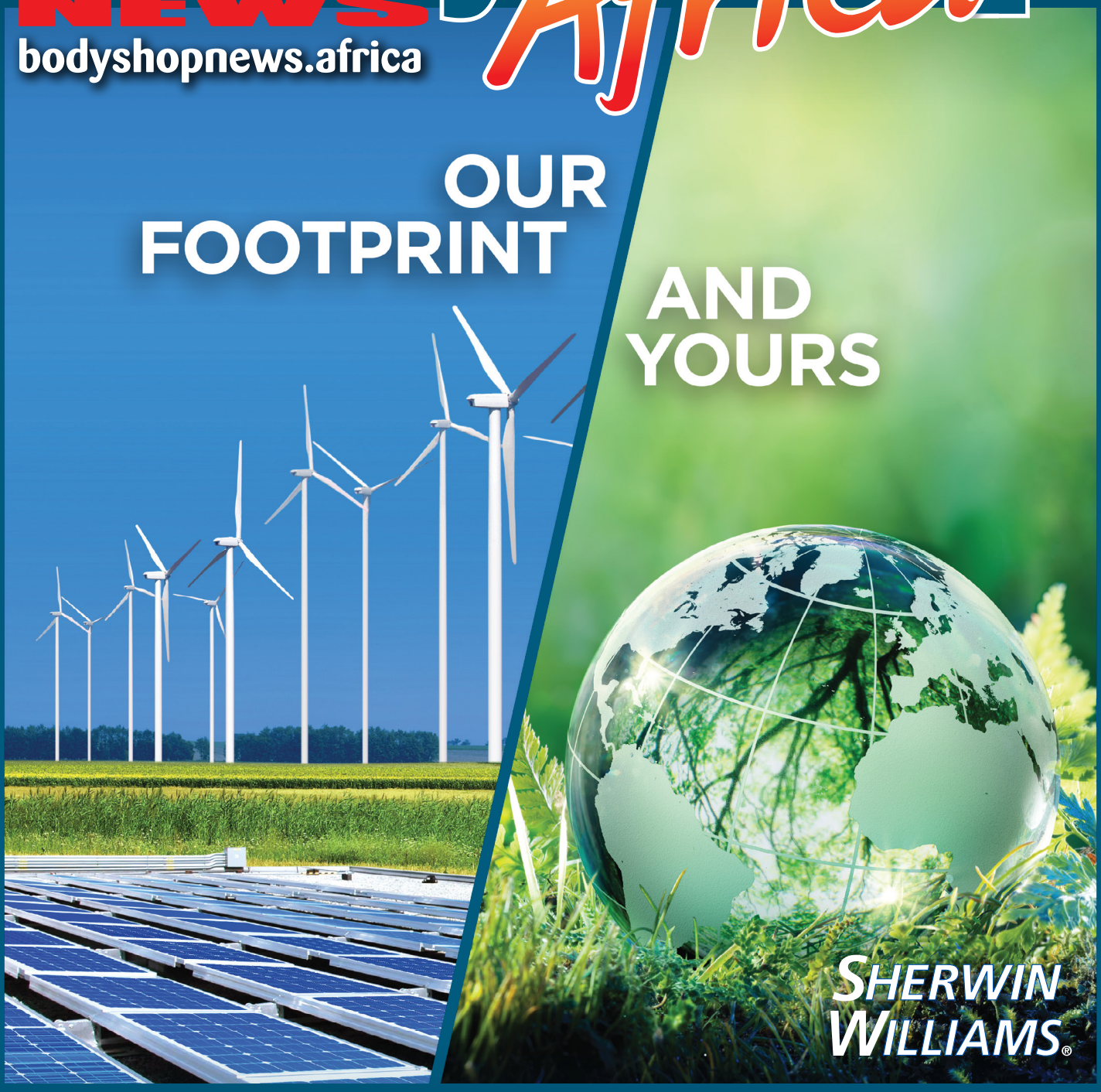
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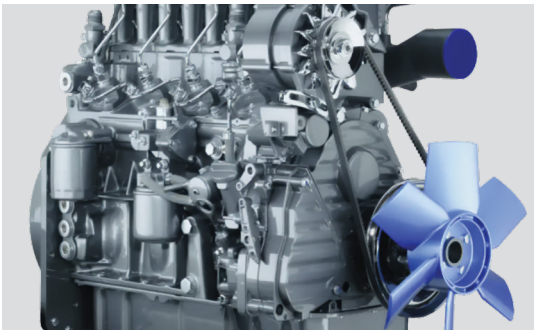
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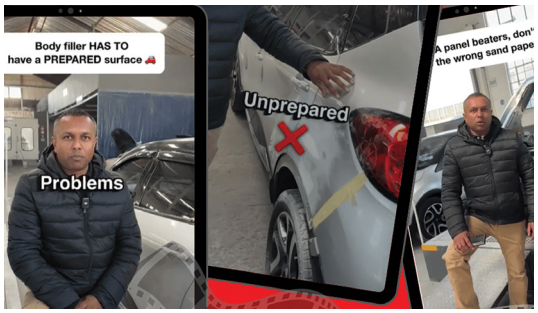
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YOUR PARTNER IN COLLISION REPAIR EXCELLENCE



MY TURN

BY RIAAN VAN ZYL

There is a particular energy that manifests when our industry gathers under one roof. This October, that energy will be felt at Automechanika Johannesburg 2026, which takes place from 27 to 29 October at Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand.

As this September/October issue of BodyShop News Africa reaches readers, the final preparations will be under way for three days of ideas, innovation and valuable face-to-face business.

For the collision repair community, Automechanika is far more than a trade show. It is an opportunity to see how quickly our sector is evolving. New vehicle materials, advanced driver-assistance systems, electric and hybrid powertrains, digital estimating, refinishing technology and increasingly sophisticated workshop equipment are changing the way repairs are assessed, planned and completed. Keeping pace is no longer optional; it is central to delivering safe, efficient and commercially sustainable repairs.

The show floor gives repairers, suppliers, insurers, manufacturers, educators and industry bodies the opportunity to examine these developments at close range. Products can be compared, demonstrations watched and difficult questions put directly to the people behind the technology. Just as important, the conversations between stands often reveal the practical realities behind the headlines: the skills gaps, investment decisions, workflow pressures and customer expectations shaping workshops across South Africa and the wider continent.

Skills development must remain at the centre of those conversations. Equipment and software can transform a business, but only when people are trained to use them correctly and confidently. Our industry needs a strong pipeline of apprentices, technicians, estimators and managers, together with continuous learning for experienced professionals. Automechanika provides an important meeting point for building partnerships that can turn this need into action.

BodyShop News Africa will be available at the event, and I warmly invite you to pick up a copy, engage with the stories in this issue and share your own perspective with us. Our role is to reflect the people and businesses moving collision repair forward, and the best insights often begin with a conversation on the ground.

As you walk the halls, look beyond the latest product launch. Ask how a solution will improve repair quality, technician safety, cycle time, profitability and trust with customers. Seek out the people who challenge familiar thinking and make time for the relationships that strengthen our industry long after the doors close.

For body shops, the value of attending lies in returning home with more than brochures. A useful exhibition should prompt a fresh look at processes, training priorities and supplier relationships. Even one well-chosen conversation or demonstration can lead to a safer repair method, a smarter investment or a more productive way of working.

Let us use Automechanika Johannesburg 2026 not simply to observe what comes next, but to help shape it — with greater professionalism, stronger skills and a shared commitment to world-class collision repair across Africa.

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Ev Repair Readiness Moves Into Focus As South Africa's Market Evolves



World EV Day on 9 September offers a timely reminder that South Africa's vehicle repair sector is entering a new phase, as electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles become more common on local roads.

While electric vehicles remain a small part of the overall vehicle parc, their growing presence is already affecting the way accident repairs are planned and carried out. These vehicles are built around more advanced systems than conventional internal combustion models, which means collision repairers must follow different procedures to ensure the work is completed safely and correctly.

The South African Motor Body Repairers' Association (SAMBRA), part of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), says the local repair industry is responding to this shift through training, investment and updated safety practices. However, it also notes that some repairs can take longer owing to the specialist skills and processes involved.

Juan Hanekom, National Director of SAMBRA, explains that one of the most important considerations is the high-voltage system found in electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Depending on the nature of the damage, the vehicle's high-voltage system may need to be safely shut down before repairs begin. Once the repairs have been completed, the system must be properly reactivated by technicians with the relevant qualifications. These steps are vital for the safety of repair staff and vehicle owners alike.

Hanekom says South Africa currently still has a limited number of technicians trained to work on high-voltage systems, especially outside the main urban centres. This reflects the early stage of the country's electric vehicle market, where demand for such specialist expertise is still developing.

As a result, some vehicles may need to be handled by specific repair facilities or technicians, who can add logistical steps to the process. In certain cases, this may affect how quickly repairs can be completed.

SAMBRA stresses that this is not an indication that the motor body repair industry is falling behind. Rather, it is part of a broader transition taking place across the automotive sector as new-vehicle technologies become more widely adopted.

Repair businesses are increasingly preparing for the future by investing in high-voltage training, suitable workshop equipment and strict safety procedures. As electric vehicle ownership grows, the number of skilled technicians and approved repair facilities is expected to increase as well.

For motorists, SAMBRA advises that any high-voltage-related repair requirements are usually considered as part of the complete repair assessment. The exact process may differ depending on the insurer, the vehicle manufacturer's repair specifications and the repair programme being followed.

Drivers are encouraged to use accredited repairers and to speak to their insurers soon after an incident. This can help them understand what steps may be required and whether any specialist handling is needed for their electric or plug-in hybrid vehicle.

Hanekom says successful EV collision repairs will require continued co-operation between all role players in the automotive value chain. Repairers must keep building their technical capability, manufacturers must support access to model-specific repair information and training, and insurers must be aware of the correct procedures during assessment and authorisation.

The repair industry has already adapted to significant technology changes, including advanced driver assistance systems, complex electronics and the increased use of lightweight materials. Electric vehicles represent the next stage of that ongoing evolution.

As South Africa's electric vehicle population expands, SAMBRA expects the repair sector's skills base and technical capacity to strengthen further. The message for motorists is clear: the industry is preparing for the future, and the standards required to repair electrified vehicles safely will continue to develop alongside market growth.

Henkel Marks 75 Years Of South African Innovation



Henkel South Africa is marking 75 years of operations in the country while its parent company celebrates 150 years since its founding in Germany, highlighting a legacy of industrial innovation, local manufacturing and long-term investment.

The company, founded by Fritz Henkel in 1876, has grown from a detergent manufacturer into a global group operating in more than 70 countries. Today, it employs about 47,000 people and is known for adhesive technologies and consumer brands used in homes, factories and commercial sectors.

Henkel's South Africa's story began in 1951, when the country became the company's first subsidiary outside Europe. Since then, the business has developed alongside the local industrial economy, supplying products and technical support to sectors, including automotive, packaging, construction, consumer goods and manufacturing.

Over the decades, Henkel South Africa has expanded its local production capacity, introduced new technologies and strengthened its role as a partner to industry. Its portfolio includes well-known brands such as Loctite, Pritt, Schwarzkopf and got2b, as well as advanced adhesive solutions used in manufacturing and assembly.

Henkel South Africa President Arash Radgoudarzi said the anniversary was both a moment of reflection and a renewed commitment to the future.

"As we celebrate 75 years in South Africa and 150 years globally, we are not simply reflecting on our history, we are reaffirming our commitment to the future," he said. "Our success has always been built on strong partnerships, continuous innovation and the dedication of our people."

The company said the milestone also reflected its wider purpose: "Pioneers at heart for the good of generations", and its global anniversary theme, "Future? Ready!" Both point to Henkel's focus on sustainability, innovation and adapting to changing customer needs.

In South Africa, that approach has included investment in reducing the environmental impact of its Alrode manufacturing facility through renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects. The company has also supported skills development, education initiatives, community partnerships and early childhood development programmes.

As part of its anniversary year, Henkel South Africa is also strengthening engagement with customers and industry partners. Its inaugural Training Day will bring customers together for practical learning, technical knowledge sharing and collaboration across its hardware and adhesive technology portfolio.

Natasha Naidoo, Director of Adhesives at Henkel South Africa, said the company's role has been shaped by its ability to help customers solve manufacturing challenges.

"Our focus remains firmly on the future," she said. "We will continue developing solutions that enable more efficient, sustainable and resilient manufacturing."

For Henkel, the anniversary is not only a measure of past success. It is also a platform for future growth, continued local investment and closer collaboration with South African industry.

Ford Apprenticeship Tackles Repair Skills Gap



South Africa's auto repair industry is under mounting pressure as dealerships struggle to find technicians capable of working on increasingly complex vehicles.

With advanced diagnostics, electronics and software now integral to modern cars, workshops need specialists who can move beyond routine servicing and deliver precise technical solutions. Ford South Africa is responding with a new apprenticeship programme designed to build a pipeline of repair-ready talent.

"South Africa faces a striking paradox. We have high youth unemployment, while industries such as the automotive sector are struggling to find the specialised technical skills they need," says Kevin Heunis, Service Engineering and Operations Director, Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa (Pty) Limited.

"That need is very real at dealership level. Vehicles are increasingly becoming sophisticated technology platforms, and our dealers need diagnosticians, technologists and problem-solvers who understand advanced systems and who can resolve complex problems. The technical capability in our workshops ultimately has a direct bearing on the experience we provide our customers."

Ford South Africa's Auto Technician Apprenticeship Scholarship is designed to create a pipeline of future-ready technicians for its dealer network, while opening career opportunities for young South Africans with technical aptitude, curiosity and problem-solving ability.

The programme was piloted in Pretoria in 2026 with eight students from low-income families, selected from local technical high schools. Over three years, they combine formal technical education with paid, hands-on dealership training, progressing from practical shadowing and theory to on-the-job repair work, advanced training and ultimately qualification.

The Auto Technician Apprenticeship will formally launch in 2027, with a new intake of students beginning their three-year apprenticeship as the pilot cohort progresses into its second year. A further intake is planned for 2028, creating overlapping cohorts and a continuous stream of technical talent.

The pilot apprentices gain workplace experience at CMH Ford Hatfield, CMH Ford Gezina and CMH Ford Steyns, receiving hands-on training and a monthly stipend. The scholarship also supports theoretical course costs, tools, uniforms and transport, while apprentices receive mentorship, professional development and career guidance.

Gift of the Givers manages student selection and programme monitoring, while MerSETA provides curriculum and theoretical training support.

The apprenticeship programme looks beyond academic results and traditional recruitment criteria to identify qualities such as curiosity, problem-solving ability, technical aptitude and practical intelligence.

"Potential doesn't always come through a CV," Kevin says. "Some of the strongest technical talent can be found in young people who naturally want to understand how things work, who build things, experiment and solve practical problems."

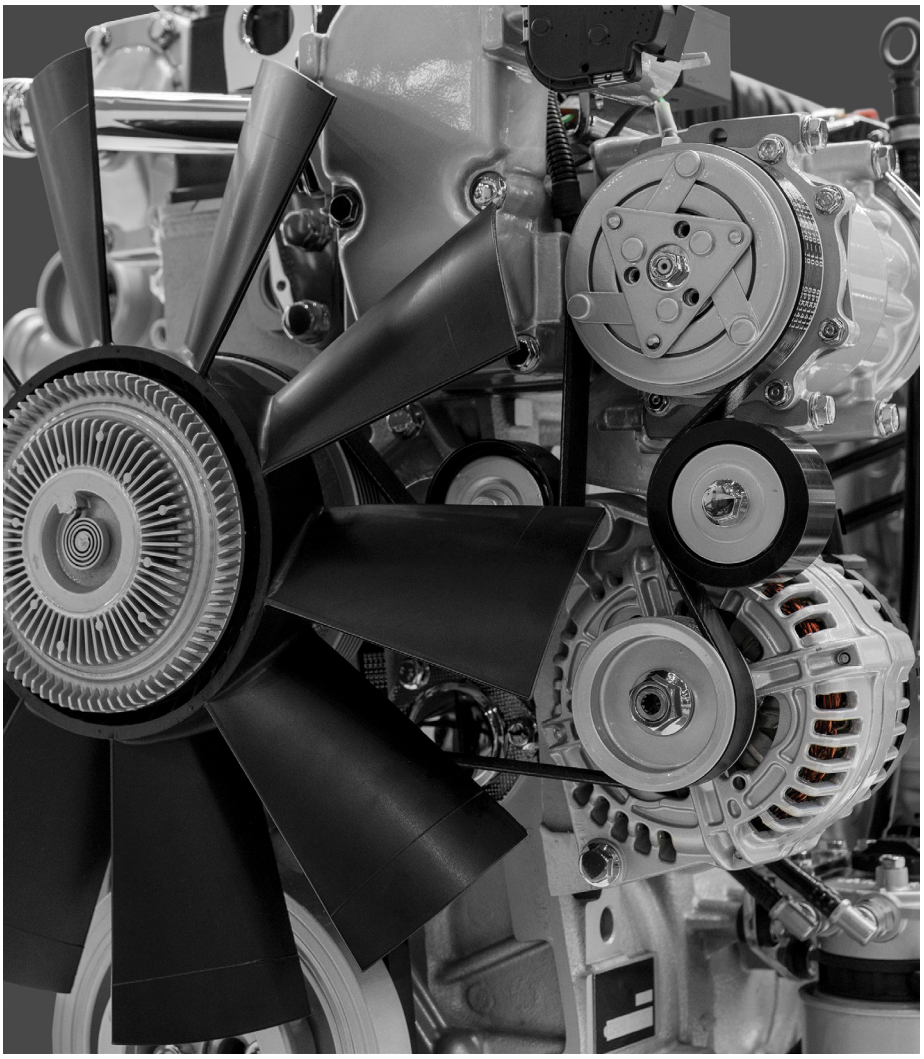
As vehicles become more complex, technicians increasingly work with advanced diagnostics, electronics, software and connectivity. Qualified technicians can progress into specialist and Master Technician roles, management, training and technical support, with some career paths offering international opportunities.

"Skills development is about far more than filling vacancies," says Neale Hill, President of Operations at Ford Motor Company, Africa.

"When a young person gains a qualification, workplace experience and an opportunity to build a meaningful career, the impact reaches beyond that individual. It can improve the prospects of a family, strengthen a community and contribute to the economy. That is why we see skills development as nation building."

Kinsey Report Returns With Sharper Focus On Vehicle Ownership Costs

South African motorists will soon again have access to one of the country's best-known guides to vehicle parts pricing, as the Kinsey Report prepares to return after a two-year break with a revised methodology and a more focused approach.



First introduced in 1990 by motoring journalist Malcolm Kinsey, the report became a trusted reference point for comparing the prices of commonly replaced vehicle parts. Its original aim was to help buyers look beyond showroom prices and understand the longer-term costs of servicing, maintaining and repairing a vehicle.

Lightstone took over responsibility for the report in 2021, pledging to preserve Kinsey's legacy while ensuring the publication remained useful in a fast-changing automotive landscape. Since then, the South African vehicle market has become more diverse and more complex, with a wider range of brands, models, body styles and powertrains now available to consumers.

The growth of SUVs and crossovers across several price points, plus the arrival of new manufacturers and the increasing relevance of battery-electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles have all affected the way vehicles and parts need to be assessed. According to Lightstone, a simple like-for-like price comparison no longer always gives motorists or the industry a fair picture, as components that look similar may differ in design, quantity, lifespan or replacement requirements.

The renewed Kinsey Report will therefore compare carefully selected vehicles across seven categories: Entry, Budget, Family SUV, Premium, Adventure 4x4, Leisure Double-cab and BEV/PHEV. Vehicle selection has been guided by South African sales data, market relevance and consumer interest, rather than attempting to cover an ever-expanding list of models.

Lightstone says the new approach places greater emphasis on technical comparability and data quality. Information gathered during the research process will be cleaned, reviewed and validated before being included. Sample sizes, price consistency and unusual responses will also be assessed to improve the reliability of the findings.

Bernard De Vantier-Strydom, Head of Projects and Research at Lightstone Auto, says the value of the report depends on the strength of the work behind it. He says the process is not only about collecting prices, but also about selecting the right vehicles, ensuring components are truly comparable and validating the information before conclusions are drawn.

The free public version of the report will focus on three main baskets of commonly replaced parts: service parts, maintenance parts and body repair parts. This is intended to give consumers practical insight into key ownership and repair costs without overloading the report with items that may not be relevant across all vehicle types.

For the Kinsey family, the report's return is also personal. Tim Kinsey, Malcolm Kinsey's son, says the publication was always a family effort, built through years of research, checking and commitment.

While the format is being updated, the purpose remains the same: to give South African motorists credible, accessible information that helps them make better-informed vehicle decisions.

Women Take The Wheel In South Africa's Changing Motor Industry



South Africa's automotive sector is changing shape as more women move into workshops, dealerships, parts businesses, management structures and technical trades that were once viewed as being almost exclusively reserved for men.

As Women's Month places renewed focus on equality and opportunity, new workforce figures from the Motor Industry Bargaining Council show that close to 95,000 women are employed in the organised automotive retail aftermarket. This means women now account for about 30% of the sector's 316,945 employees.

The Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI) says the numbers point to encouraging progress but also underline how much more can be done to broaden women's participation, particularly in technical, operational and leadership positions.

Nonhlanhla Tshabalala, RMI HR Manager and Transformation Director, says opening the industry to more women is not only about transformation, but about securing the sector's future.

"Our industry is built around people. Every time a young artisan qualifies, or a woman steps into a leadership position or a small business grows, we strengthen not only our sector but the South African economy," she says.

Tshabalala believes inclusion and innovation must work together if the motor industry is to become more resilient and better prepared for the skills demands ahead.

RMI National Director: Training, Louis van Huyssteen, says the latest employment and apprenticeship data shows a growing interest among women in automotive careers. The priority now, he says, is to ensure that women who enter training programmes are supported through to qualification and sustainable employment.

Women are already working across the aftermarket, including in vehicle sales, service advising, workshop ownership, diagnostics, collision repair, spray painting, panel beating and parts operations. In dealerships, they make up almost a third of the employees, taking on roles that range from customer-facing positions to departmental leadership and dealer principal appointments.

Their growing presence is especially important at a time when South Africa continues to face a shortage of qualified artisans. National artisan development statistics for 2025/26 indicate that women made up about 38% of artisan registrations where gender was reported. In one anonymised RMI-linked apprenticeship group, women represented 60% of apprentices, suggesting that focused recruitment can draw more young women into technical fields.

Van Huyssteen says the challenge is to convert access into long-term career outcomes. That means quality workplace exposure, proper mentorship, practical experience and equal opportunities to qualify.

RMI initiatives are attempting to build that pipeline. Project Dineo, developed with merSETA, the Department of Higher Education and Training, Harambee and the Presidency, aims to train 300 young people over three years. At least 40% of participants are expected to be women, with additional emphasis on youth with disabilities and people from previously disadvantaged communities.

The organisation's Women Driving Change initiative also continues to highlight female role models in the automotive value chain, while career awareness efforts such as the MIWA Motor Mech Shows are exposing more young women to technical careers.

Tshabalala says visibility remains essential.

"In industries like ours, recognition matters because it shows other women what's possible. When young women see successful technicians, workshop owners, engineers and executives, they begin to picture themselves following the same path," she says.

She adds that many of the women helping to reshape the industry do so outside the spotlight, in workshops, dealerships, testing stations, parts businesses and corporate offices across the country.

Looking ahead, the RMI says lasting transformation will require continued co-operation between industry, government and business. Priorities include stronger mentorship, more practical entry routes, support for women-owned businesses and making inclusion part of everyday business strategy rather than a seasonal campaign.

For Tshabalala, the goal is clear: an automotive industry where talent, commitment and skill determine opportunity.

DEUTZ Dieselpower And Britehouse Launch Smart Mining Engine Monitoring Platform

DEUTZ Dieselpower has partnered with digital solutions specialist, Britehouse, to develop a connected intelligence platform that gives mining operators a single, real-time view of diesel-engine performance and exhaust after-treatment data.

The plug-and-play solution combines DEUTZ engine diagnostics with HJS filtration information in one interface, helping mines improve equipment uptime, strengthen reliability and identify faults more efficiently.

The platform addresses a common challenge in demanding mining environments, where engine and filtration data is often captured manually, stored locally or held in separate systems. This fragmented approach can restrict visibility for maintenance teams and leave them reacting to faults only once they have already affected operations.

Brenton Alexander, Branch Network Director at DEUTZ Dieselpower, says the aim has been to create a system that immediately transmits diagnostic information whenever an Engine Control Unit registers an error code. This enables technicians to respond faster, reduce manual diagnostic work and support more predictive maintenance practices.

By automating diagnostic data flow, the system helps mines to detect potential failures before they develop into serious breakdowns, improving maintenance planning and reducing unplanned downtime.

DEUTZ Dieselpower assessed several technology providers before appointing Britehouse, whose underground mining experience helped shape a solution suited to harsh operating conditions. Marco Capazario, Business Unit Head at Britehouse, says the collaboration combines DEUTZ's engineering knowledge with Britehouse's digital expertise to deliver real-time visibility across three connected data layers.

The first layer is the DEUTZ Engine ECU, which captures operating metrics, diagnostic error codes and threshold events directly from the engine. The second is the HJS Particulate Filtration System, which monitors after-treatment performance and filter condition. HJS Sintered Metal Filter modules remove more than 99% of soot and fine particulates, while their cleanable stainless-steel construction is designed for tough underground applications.

The third layer is ATAJO OnEdge, Britehouse's modular IoT and edge computing platform. It enables secure data collection at the edge, real-time analytics, automated alerts and on-site visual dashboards.

Designed for connected or Wi-Fi-enabled environments, the platform has been tested on DEUTZ dynamometers and is ready for deployment. As a hosted solution, it can be installed within a single shift, allowing mining operators to start gaining operational value quickly.

Once active, the platform provides live access to diagnostic trends and abnormal operating conditions. Automated error-code transmission helps maintenance teams prioritise repairs, allocate technician resources effectively and reduce time spent on manual checks.

The system also supports faster alert-to-action workflows, helping reduce repair turnaround times and maintain production continuity. Automated reporting creates time-stamped audit trails and historical trend reports, reducing administrative effort while improving accountability in emission-system management.

DEUTZ Dieselpower and Britehouse will demonstrate the platform at Electra Mining Africa 2026, taking place from 7 to 11 September 2026 at the Johannesburg Expo Centre. Visitors can view the solution at Hall 5, Stand G9, or discuss possible pilot deployments.



Why Not Swap Your Fitbit For A Diagnostic Volkswagen?



"I walked nearly 10,000 steps today."

This seemingly arbitrary statement has become commonplace in everyday conversation, alongside the equally widespread adoption of smartwatches, fitness trackers and health apps.

As people have grown comfortable with health devices – and the data they generate – academics at the Institut für Fahrzeugtechnik (Institute for Automotive Engineering) and the Peter L Reichertz Institut für Medizinische Informatik at the Technical University of Braunschweig, together with industrial powerhouse TÜV Nord, began to wonder whether a vehicle could be turned into a powerful medical diagnostic device.

The university and TÜV Nord are presenting their research at Automechanika Frankfurt, the world's largest and arguably most authoritative automotive aftermarket show. The event opens today in Frankfurt and runs until the weekend.

The academic hypothesis is simple, says Prof Thomas Deserno of the university: a modern vehicle is a highly capable computer, and we spend an average of 43 minutes a day in our cars. In principle, medical scanning technologies could be integrated to analyse your face, measure your heart rate through the steering wheel and collect numerous other physical indicators, all of which could provide valuable medical insights.

To test the idea, the university and TÜV Nord built a range of medical scanning devices into the steering wheel, added a loose belt that could be integrated into the seatbelt and installed cameras to monitor the driver's face. All the information is fed through the vehicle's CAN bus system — the diagnostic and communication network linking the vehicle's internal systems — to a central computer.

Artificial intelligence analyses the data in real time and provides useful diagnostic feedback to the driver.

According to Prof Deserno, the diagnostic capability is far more than a novelty. In Germany, the government has publicly stated its goal of reducing road deaths by 40% by 2030. If a vehicle can help pre empt health issues such as strokes, heart attacks or other serious conditions through continuous monitoring, it would offer a genuine benefit to vehicle owners and motorists in general.

Prof Deserno adds that their research identifies young people as a particularly vulnerable group, as they often fail to take early signs of cardiovascular or chronic disease seriously.

For older people, the technology offers even clearer advantages. It can also go beyond diagnosis: for example, by integrating with the vehicle's self driving and ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems) functions so the car can take over in the event of a perceived medical emergency.





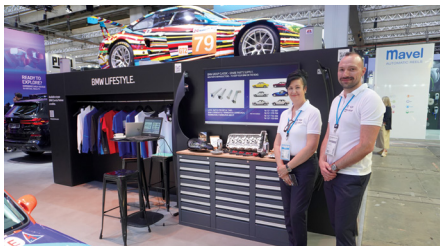


Keeping Old Timers Young, The BMW Way









You know that sinking feeling when you dent and crack the polycarbonate front fender of your BMW Z1 (E30 Z), or when the turbo on your 1973 BMW 2002 gives up the ghost.

What do you do? Only around 7 000 Z1s were ever built, and the 2002 has been out of production for roughly half a century.

"Kein Problem!" says BMW. We have all those parts. Brand new. With proper part numbers. Ready to order from your local dealer.

German manufacturers have long been known for looking after their back catalogues, but BMW is taking special care to highlight its BMW Group Classic programme at this year's Automechanika Frankfurt in Germany.

For the uninitiated, Automechanika Frankfurt is the largest vehicle aftermarket show in the world, and therefore the largest automotive focused show, full stop. With halls, displays and training programmes covering every corner of the automotive value chain, it attracts thousands of visitors from Jamaica to Japan, and South Africa to Afghanistan.

This year, BMW is putting its classic vehicles front and centre.

Staffed by a team of hyper enthusiastic experts who happily reminisce about classic Mini, BMW and BMW Motorrad models, the stand showcases the extraordinary lengths they go to in recreating long lost parts. Whether it's producing new body panel moulds for the Z1 or machining fresh cylinder heads for the E30 3 Series (affectionately known as the Gusheshe in South Africa), they do it all.

And don't think they only focus on large panels or high wear components. They have everything from widened wings for racing spec 1980 M3s to airflow sensors for more modern models, rims for 40 year old BMW motorcycles and light housings for classic Minis. In all, over 65 000 part numbers are maintained by the BMW Group Classic division.

BMW Group Classic also assists collectors with full nuts and bolts restorations. Once completed, a vehicle returning from their workshop will drive, stop, turn and even smell like it did when it first left the factory.

Perhaps most special of all is the headquarters of BMW Group Classic. Based in the original factory where BMW began in 1916, the division regularly parks some of its historic vehicles outside the building, reminding passers by of the rich heritage behind the brand.

More information on BMW Group Classic is available at bmwgroup-classic.com.

Rats Gnaw No More: Ultrasonic Protection For Vehicles





While the risk of rodent damage may be small in South Africa, it is significant in Germany, says the team at K&K Handelsgesellschaft.

Last year, according to K&K Handelsgesellschaft, over 200 000 cases of rodent damage to vehicles were reported in Germany, costing car owners and their insurers upwards of €150 million.

To combat the problem, the company has created a Marten Defence System to protect vehicles against rodents and martens, a type of weasel that is widespread in many European countries. The system is on display at Automechanika Frankfurt, the world's largest automotive aftermarket show and one of the flagship events of the more than 800-year-old Messe Frankfurt.

K&K Handelsgesellschaft says that whatever the reason for vermin's predilection for automotive wiring, the damage they cause has become exponentially worse in modern cars. This is especially true if the vehicle is fitted with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), which need to be recalibrated after repair or replacement, or if it is an electric vehicle with high-voltage wiring that requires specialist equipment to repair.

The Marten Defence System offers an elegant solution by generating a low-volume, high-frequency sound when the vehicle is stationary. The sound is highly distressing, yet harmless to rats and weasels, driving them away without disturbing pets or even wildlife.

Interestingly, the research team at K&K Handelsgesellschaft found that older rodents become hard of hearing and can be impervious to sound alone. Consequently, the new version also delivers a non-lethal electric shock to rodents that touch the underside of the vehicle.

The system is armed automatically by a motion detector, which senses when the vehicle is stationary. It then switches itself on and remains active until the vehicle is driven again.

In Europe, the system has already received endorsements from manufacturers such as VW, Stellantis and Ford.

Read more about the system here: https://www.kuk-marderabwehr.de/en/

Volvo's Connected Cars Learn To Look Further Down The Road



Volvo is expanding its long-running safety philosophy from protecting occupants in a crash to helping drivers avoid danger before it looms in front of them.

The company's latest over-the-air software update adds four new Connected Safety alerts to the Volvo EX90, EX60 and ES90, giving compatible cars the ability to share real-time hazard information with one another.

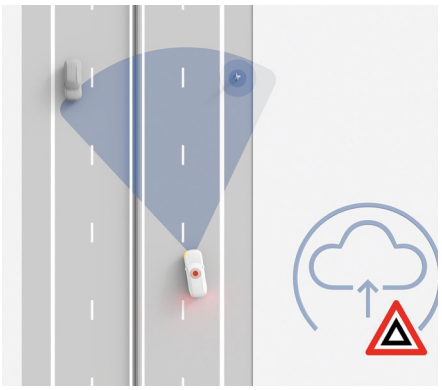
The new alerts cover large animals, vulnerable road users, roadworks and accidents ahead. In practice, that means a car that detects a deer or similar animal near the road can send a warning to other connected vehicles approaching the same area. The same principle applies if pedestrians or cyclists are identified near a highway, if roadworks are detected, or if an accident has been reported further along the route.

This is particularly useful in places where a driver's own eyes and vehicle sensors may not be adequate. A hazard hidden beyond a bend, over a crest or in heavy rain can become visible too late for a calm reaction. By using shared data from other connected cars and, in some cases, traffic management centres, Volvo's system aims to give drivers a few valuable extra seconds to slow down, change lane or simply pay closer attention.

Volvo first introduced its Connected Safety technology in 2016, initially with functions such as Slippery Road Alert and Hazard Light Alert. The network has since grown substantially, with more than one million Volvo cars now using connected safety technology. In Europe, the information can also be shared through the Data for Road Safety ecosystem, allowing selected alerts to reach vehicles from other brands and national traffic management centres.

The same update also improves the cabin experience. EX90 and ES90 drivers with the optional Bowers & Wilkins premium sound system gain Spatial Audio support in Apple CarPlay, powered by Dolby Atmos. In the EX90, the system uses 25 speakers to create a more immersive soundstage for music, podcasts and live recordings.

The update shows how modern vehicles are becoming software-defined products that can improve after they



leave the showroom. Volvo was recently recognised by S&P Global Mobility for reaching Level 5 capability in software-defined cars, a sign that future updates may continue to add meaningful safety and convenience features without requiring a visit to a dealer.

For Volvo, the message is clear: the safest car is no longer only the one with the strongest structure or smartest sensors. Increasingly, it is the one that can learn from every connected vehicle ahead of it.

Ford Stresses Seatbelt And ADAS Checks In Collision Repair



Ford is putting renewed emphasis on the need for thorough safety system inspections after collision repairs, with the latest edition of its OnTarget newsletter focusing on seatbelt systems and advanced driver assistance systems.

The publication highlights that any vehicle system involving a component that has been repaired or replaced should be tested to confirm it is operating as intended. This includes seatbelts, seatbelt retractors and related restraint systems. Ford points repairers to its official Workshop Manual for the correct inspection and functional testing procedures, which it says should be familiar to collision repair businesses working on Ford and Lincoln vehicles.

The newsletter introduces a new series dedicated to seatbelts, using the 2026 Ford Expedition as an example. The first instalment looks at key seatbelt system operations and component descriptions, including emergency locking retractors, automatic locking retractors and web sensing retractors.

Emergency locking retractors are designed to lock the seatbelt during heavy braking, sharp cornering or on impact. This function helps limit the forward movement of occupants during sudden driving events. Ford advises that testing should be carried out with the retractor installed in the vehicle and assessed on level ground.

Automatic locking retractors are commonly used when securing a child seat in a passenger seating position. This mode is activated when the belt webbing is fully pulled out and then allowed to retract. A clicking sound indicates that the retractor has entered automatic locking mode, preventing the belt from being pulled out again until the webbing fully retracts.

The web sensing retractor function responds to the speed at which the belt is pulled out or retracted. When the webbing moves at a set speed, the mechanism locks the spool and prevents an additional section of the belt from being released. Ford notes that only a small amount of webbing movement is usually needed to release this mode, but locked systems should be handled according to Workshop Manual procedures.

Beyond seatbelts, the newsletter also draws attention to Ford and Lincoln's updated position statement on advanced driver assistance systems. The revised statement uses stronger language, stating that compliance with Ford's standards is mandatory to restore a vehicle to its original safety performance.

Ford says ADAS repairs are not limited to cameras, radar and ultrasonic sensors. They may also involve bumper beams, grilles, glass, brackets, quarter panels and other components that affect sensor position or visibility. Repairers are therefore urged to follow original equipment specifications carefully, especially during glass replacement, refinishing and structural repairs.

The latest OnTarget edition also covers repair topics such as Lincoln Nautilus A-pillar trim, a Ford Explorer sectioning option and Ford Escape body components.



How Hyundai And Kia Use Digital Measuring To Build Better Cars

Hyundai Motor and Kia are using advanced digital measuring technology to improve the quality, comfort and durability of their vehicles before they reach customers.

At the Namyang Research and Development Centre in South Korea, the companies operate a Digital Measuring Centre, known as the DMC. Its job is to check how accurately all parts of a vehicle fit together. This may sound like a small detail, but it can make a big difference to the ownership experience.

If a car door does not close smoothly, if wind noise becomes noticeable at higher speeds, or if water begins to leak through a tiny gap, the problem may not be caused by a major fault. It can result from very small differences in the way panels, doors and other parts have been made or assembled. These differences are often too small to spot with the naked eye, but they can affect how the vehicle feels and performs over time.

To prevent this, Hyundai and Kia measure up to 1,000 points on each vehicle body. These measurements are checked against about 600 quality standards. The aim is to ensure that the structure, panels and moving parts are correctly aligned and working as intended.

The DMC focuses on four main areas: exterior quality, noise and vibration, water tightness, and the ease and accuracy of assembly. Engineers use Coordinate Measuring Machines with highly precise sensors to scan the vehicle body in three dimensions. This allows them to see whether parts are positioned correctly and whether gaps or alignments meet the required standards.

Moving parts such as doors, boot lids and tailgates are also carefully checked. Robotic systems and 3D scanners measure their shape and movement, helping engineers confirm that they open, close and fit properly. Components can also be tested on special fixtures before they are installed on a vehicle, allowing problems to be found earlier in the development process.



The final stage involves checking the complete vehicle. Engineers scan the finished car and compare the data with measurements taken during earlier stages. If a problem is found, they can trace it back to the part or process that caused it. This makes it easier to correct issues before vehicles go into full production.

Hyundai and Kia also test how moving parts behave during real use. In a dynamic motion laboratory, cameras and sensors capture doors and tailgates opening and closing at very high speeds. These tests reveal tiny movements and changes in shape that people would not normally notice.

All the measurement data are stored and analysed in one central system. Hyundai and Kia use this information to find the best assembly methods, identify possible causes of variation and support better decision-making. The companies also plan to use accumulated data to develop artificial intelligence tools that can further improve vehicle development.

According to Hyundai Motor Group, the purpose of the DMC is not only to find faults, but to build quality into the customer experience. By managing details that customers may never see, the company hopes to deliver vehicles that feel quieter, stronger and more reliable in everyday use.

Automechanika Frankfurt 2026 Highlights Innovation, Automation And New Opportunities

Automechanika Frankfurt 2026 once again reinforced its position as the world's leading automotive aftermarket exhibition, attracting more than 112 000 visitors from 173 countries and 4 400 exhibitors from 80 countries. Among them was the BodyShop News team from Australia, South Africa, South Korea and the Middle East, who explored the latest innovations and industry developments across the vast exhibition grounds.



Several key themes emerged from the event. Electrification continues to shape the future of mobility, although adoption rates differ between regions. Presenting research from FIA and EY-Parthenon, Willem Groenewald noted that vehicle replacement cycles have extended in many markets, including South Africa, where motorists are typically keeping vehicles for around 10 years. He added that affordability remains a major factor influencing purchase decisions.

Artificial intelligence, automation and



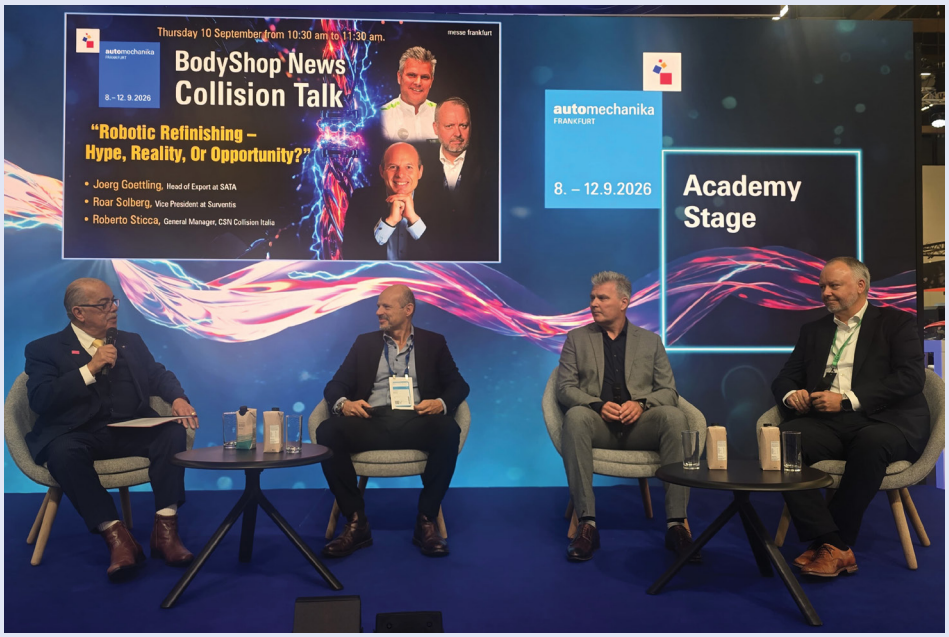




robotics dominated discussions across both exhibition halls and the ***BodyShop News*** Collision Talk seminar programme. Speaking during the series, Steve Arndt, Executive Vice President Refinish Coatings at Surventis, said AI would be "incredible for us", helping businesses automate processes, predict market trends and improve efficiency. Automation was further highlighted during a Collision Talk panel on robotic refinishing, where industry leaders encouraged repairers to view emerging technologies as opportunities to improve productivity and consistency.

Reflecting on the seminar programme, Michel Malik, Publisher of ***BodyShop News***, said: "The information they imparted to the audience was invaluable and reassuring, especially in the current tough global business environment."

Other major trends included the growth of software-defined vehicles, increasing involvement of vehicle manufacturers in the aftermarket, and renewed interest in classic vehicle restoration. Exhibitors such as Stellantis, BMW and ZF showcased integrated service, digital and aftermarket solutions designed to support increasingly connected vehicles.



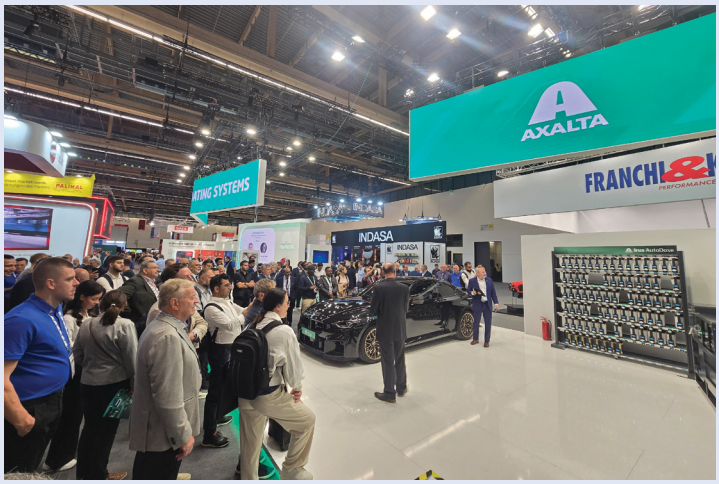
The event also highlighted opportunities arising from shifting global trade dynamics. During a gathering of South African exhibitors and visitors, Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition John Steenhuisen said: "There are many exciting opportunities that have presented themselves in Central and Eastern Europe and we are also in conversation with countries like Canada to open new markets for industrial products from South Africa."

Together, the exhibition and Collision Talk discussions painted a picture of an aftermarket industry increasingly driven by AI, automation, digitalisation, sustainability and skills development, while remaining optimistic about future growth and investment.

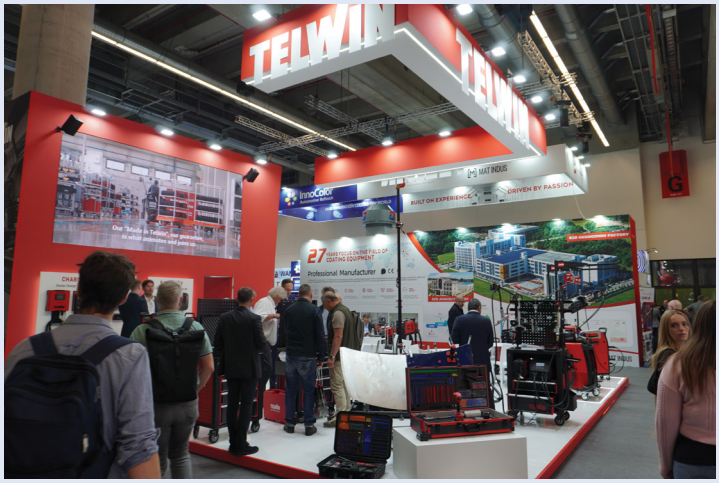





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Automechanika Frankfurt 2026 Innovation Award Winners

CATEGORY	WINNER	PRODUCT
AI Solutions & Digitalisation	Robert Bosch GmbH	ESI[tronic] AI Assistant
Smart Workshop & Service Solutions	MAHA	MAIA Autonomous Inspection Robot
Body & Paint	CARTEC Autotechnik Fuchs	SmartBoxBlower Auto Pilot
Sustainable Drive Solutions	Borg Automotive	Remanufactured eDrive Motor
Circular Economy & Remanufacturing	rema.germany	Digital Return & Core Intelligence System (RMS)
Green Award	Autocraft Solutions Group	REVIVE® EV Battery Workshops
Data, Connectivity & Cybersecurity	Knorr-Bremse	WESP CV Platform
Commercial Vehicle & Fleet Innovation	SKF	Low-Friction Wheel Bearing Technology
Advanced Parts & Vehicle Technologies	MEYLE	HD Brake Disc
Car Care, Cleaning & Detailing	POLYTOP	BLUE LINE® Series
Smart Accessories & Lifestyle	GEN-Y Hitch	PHANTOM-XT Adjustable Towing Hitch



3M South Africa Honours Channel Partners At Inaugural Awards Evening

3M South Africa has recognised the businesses and individuals behind its local channel network at the inaugural 3M South Africa Channel Awards, held at Bryanston Country Club in Johannesburg on 13 August 2026.









Themed "Strong Partners. Stronger Together", the event brought together channel partners from across South Africa to celebrate performance, innovation, customer service and long-term collaboration. The awards highlighted the vital role partners play in taking 3M's science-led products and technologies to customers nationwide.

Rather than focusing only on sales, 3M used the evening to acknowledge the broader contribution of its channel community. Partners were recognised across ten categories, including market expansion, solutions selling, personal safety, customer engagement, product innovation, marketing impact, digital transformation and individual excellence.

These partners are central to how 3M supports customers in South Africa. They provide technical knowledge, advise on correct product selection and application, identify new opportunities and help organisations address operational, safety and productivity challenges. Many of the partnerships recognised at the event have been built up over several years, while newer partners are bringing fresh ideas and capability to the market.

The awards followed a structured judging process using both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Performance-based categories were assessed using internal business data, while nomination-based categories required detailed submissions and supporting evidence. Results were moderated and validated before the winners were confirmed.

The evening also included business insights and networking. Journalist and broadcaster, Jeremy Maggs, delivered a keynote address on South Africa's economic environment, resilient sectors and growth prospects. Ismail Mapara, 3M Regional Business Director for Emerging Markets, shared regional and corporate perspectives, outlining the company's direction and future opportunities for partners. A live demonstration of 3M sealing tape added a practical product element to the programme.

The event drew strong support, with all the invited channel partners attending and 62 guests present.

Pienaar Bros North was named Channel Partner of the Year, the top award of the evening, in recognition of outstanding overall performance, strategic alignment and disciplined execution. The company also featured in other categories, underlining its role in 3M South Africa's channel ecosystem.

Other winners included Protekta Safety Gear, which received the Growth and Market Expansion Award, and Coastland Sales, which won the Solutions Selling Excellence Award. Shane Fagrew of Legg & Wessel received the Personal Safety Leadership Award.

Further honours went to Ray Backhouse of Pienaar Bros North, Banele Nkambule of Hearing Protection and Communication, and Marshall Naidoo of Pienaar Bros North. Hi-Tap Bolt & Nut CC, SHEQ Safety and the Pienaar Bros North VMS Team were also recognised.

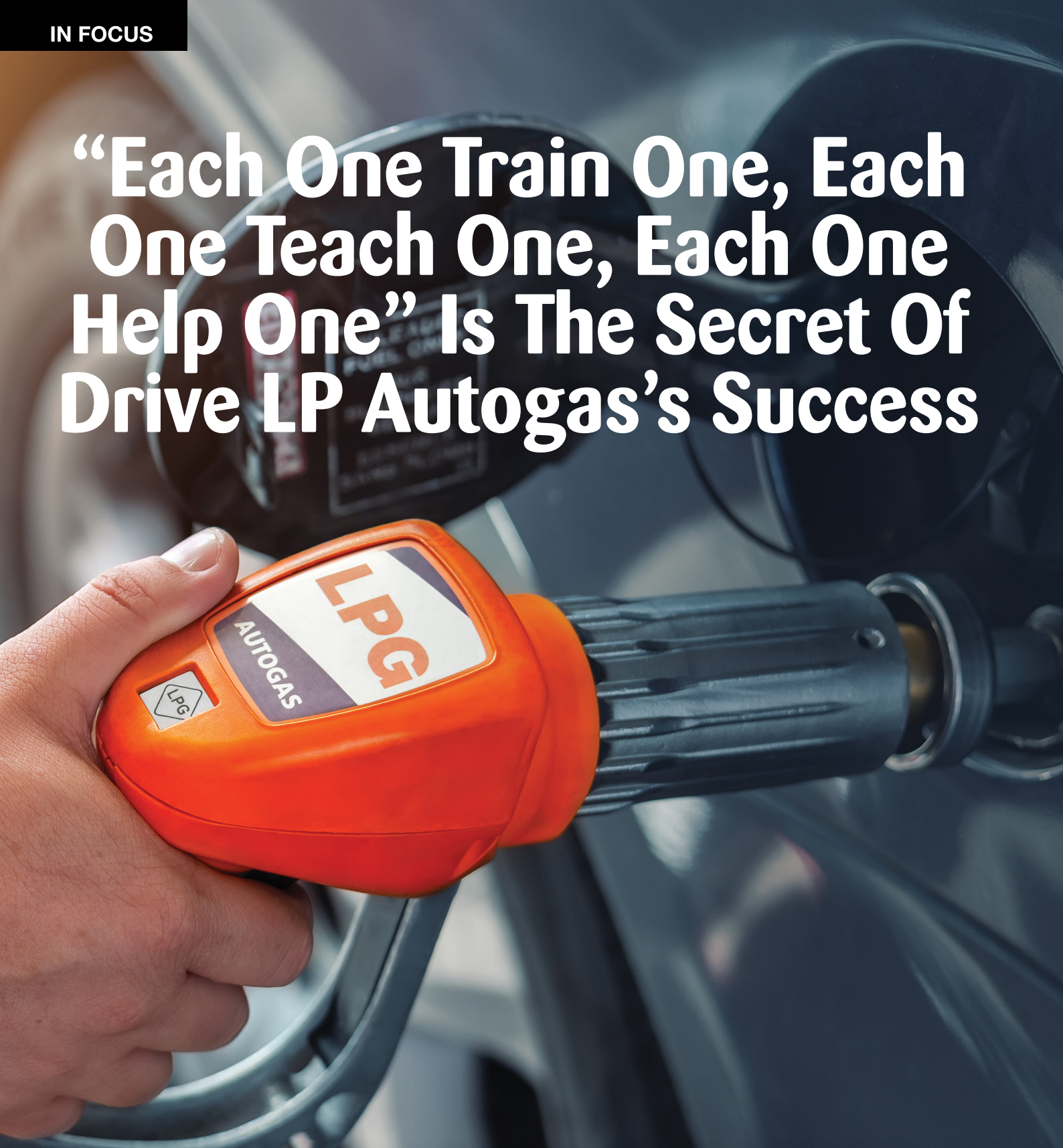
3M said the awards aim to build momentum across its channel network by celebrating customer focus, collaboration, technical expertise, innovation and sustainable growth.







“Each One Train One, Each One Teach One, Each One Help One” Is The Secret Of Drive LP Autogas’s Success



When Andrea Bogner-Botha walked into her late father’s mechanical workshop in 2015, she did not step into a neat succession plan.

She stepped into grief, responsibility and a business that had to keep moving. The workshop was old, busy and functional, but it had lost the person who carried much of its technical knowledge. Andrea was a single mother with an eight-month-old baby, leading about 15 people and who suddenly had to face a question many family-run automotive businesses will recognise: how do you keep the doors open when the skills of the previous generation are no longer there?

Her answer was to lead, delegate and learn. Twelve years later, that difficult beginning has become the foundation of a new mission. After selling the workshop, Andrea established Drive LP AutoGas (Pty) Ltd, a South African company specialising in professional petrol-to-LPG AutoGas conversions. Based in Spartan, Kempton Park, the



business now sits at the intersection of aftermarket skills, alternative fuels and practical mobility.

Andrea's story is personal, but it reflects a wider aftermarket challenge. Many workshops, including collision repair and mechanical businesses, were built by owners who qualified years ago and passed knowledge down informally. That experience still matters, but vehicle technology is changing too quickly for businesses to rely on old habits alone.

For Andrea, the need for training became obvious inside her own workshop. She saw how exposed a business could be when technical knowledge sat with only one or two people, and how urgently the industry needed refresher training, gap training and more qualified artisans. That experience shaped her philosophy: "Each one train one, each one teach one, each one help one."

In 2022, she was introduced to LPG AutoGas and immediately saw its relevance. Her view was simple: workshops must either diversify or specialise if they want to remain part of a changing vehicle parc. EVs are part of the future, but not the only part. Hybrid systems, alternative fuels and transitional technologies also matter, especially where affordability, infrastructure and operating costs drive buying decisions.

Globally, LPG AutoGas is already established, with use in markets such as Turkey, South Korea, Italy, Poland and India, and more than 28 million AutoGas vehicles on the road worldwide. For South Africa, the appeal is practical: a cleaner-burning fuel that can reduce operating costs and offer motorists, e-hailers, taxis and fleets an affordable alternative today.

Andrea and her husband both drive converted V6 and V8 bi-fuel vehicles that run on either petrol or LPG AutoGas. The vehicles default to LPG and switch to petrol when the gas tank is empty, then switch back after refuelling. For high-mileage users, the flexibility is compelling: lower fuel costs, cleaner fuel and the performance drivers still enjoy.

For the repair industry, the bigger story is the ecosystem around the fuel. Converted vehicles still need maintenance, inspection, diagnostics, body repairs and safe handling. Collision repairers will increasingly need to understand how alternative fuel systems are packaged, identified and managed during repair planning. As with EVs and hybrids, awareness becomes part of risk management.

Andrea is realistic about what still has to happen. Consumers need clear answers about safety, reliability, performance, warranties and refuelling availability. Infrastructure must grow, with strategically placed LPG AutoGas dispensers and a reliable supply. Most importantly, South Africa needs trained and competent installers, supported by formal skills pathways and industry collaboration.

That is where her passion for training returns to the centre of the story. Andrea wants LPG AutoGas to become a recognised part of South Africa's transport-fuel infrastructure, alongside petrol, diesel, EV charging and other alternative fuel solutions. But credibility will depend on trained installers, informed workshops, responsible suppliers and industry partners willing to build the sector properly.

The presentation that inspired this article was also a message to women finding their place in the motor industry. Andrea does not believe women should be handed positions simply because they are women. Instead, she believes in earning a place through work, passion, resilience, persistence and consistency. Her advice is direct: become so good at what you do that the work speaks for itself.

It is a hard-won message. She began without all the answers and still speaks openly about learning, failing and becoming comfortable with uncomfortable situations. "Just start and be teachable," is the thread running through her journey. Confidence, she believes, is built by doing the things that once scared you.

Collision repair businesses may not all become LPG AutoGas conversion specialists, but they cannot ignore the broader direction of travel. The vehicle parc is diversifying, customers are cost-conscious and fleets want lower operating costs. Repairers will need to understand not only structure, refinishing and panel alignment, but also the energy systems that power the vehicles entering their shops.

Andrea's journey from an inherited workshop to an alternative fuel entrepreneur is a reminder that industries change through people who are willing to learn before they feel ready, take responsibility before conditions are perfect and leave the door open for those who come after them. For South Africa's collision repair and aftermarket sectors, LPG AutoGas may be one part of a larger mobility transition. The challenge is to build the skills, infrastructure and confidence before that future arrives at the workshop door.

Surventis Invests In Skills, Technology And Process With New Regional Competence Centre

Surventis has launched a new Regional Competence Centre (RCC) aimed at helping automotive refinishing professionals develop practical skills in a facility designed to replicate the conditions of a modern body shop.





The centre was developed around a simple principle: successful refinishing depends on much more than only paint products. Airflow, filtration, preparation, equipment, curing processes, safety systems and technician expertise all play a role in determining the quality of the final finish.

According to Trevor Vogl, former Head of Technical at Surventis and one of the key contributors to the project, the RCC was designed to provide a realistic training environment where technicians can gain hands-on experience while developing a broader understanding of the complete refinishing process.

"The RCC is more than a classroom or product-training venue. It is a purpose-built environment where technicians can learn using equipment and processes in working conditions that closely reflect a real body shop."

The facility includes two full-size paint and drying booths, a dedicated paint-mixing and storage area, a separate gun-cleaning room and a Stucchi central dust-extraction system. Large observation windows allow visitors and trainees to view demonstrations





without having to enter the controlled spray environment.

A major focus of the centre is airflow management, particularly for modern waterborne coating systems. According to Mace Moodley, CEO of Your Equipment Supplier (YES), airflow, pressure balance and air distribution have become fundamental engineering considerations for modern refinishing operations.

The RCC's booths are equipped with advanced filtration, extraction, heating and drying systems, as well as touch-screen controls with dedicated programmes for waterborne and solvent-based paints. Automated flash-off, baking and cool-down cycles help create a consistent refinishing environment while allowing technicians to focus on application quality.

Safety has also been integrated throughout the facility, with ATEX-compliant equipment, fire protection systems, dedicated extraction areas and compressed-air safety interlocks all forming part of the overall design.

While the engineering behind the RCC is significant, both Vogl and Moodley emphasise that the facility's ultimate purpose is people. The centre aims to help technicians develop practical workplace skills while fostering a better understanding of how technology, process and training contribute to quality refinishing results.

For Surventis, the RCC represents an investment not only in equipment and technology, but in the future capability of the automotive refinishing industry.




SURVENTIS
basiac







Body Filler Mistakes That Undermine A Professional Repair

Body filler plays a vital role in modern panel beating, but it must be treated as a precision material rather than a short cut.

When used properly, it helps to restore the correct shape of a damaged panel, and it provides a sound base for primer and paint. When used carelessly, it can create defects that only become visible much later in the repair process.

Our friend Ronald Janki from Omnia Panelbeaters, who has seen how small errors in preparation and application can lead to major quality problems, helped us to identify five common mistakes.

One of the biggest mistakes is mixing too much hardener into the body filler. Some technicians may do this to make the filler dry faster, especially when working under pressure. However, an incorrect mix can cause major paint reactions. Too much hardener may seep through after painting, leaving visible marks or staining once the paint has dried. Instead of saving time, the repair may have to be redone.

Another frequent problem occurs even when the filler has been mixed and applied correctly. If the technician uses the wrong finishing paper during sanding, deep scratch patterns can be left in the surface. Primer may appear to hide these marks at first, but once it dries and settles, the scratches can reappear as sinkage. This leaves the final finish looking uneven and unprofessional.

A third mistake is applying body filler to an unprepared surface. Filler should never be placed directly onto shiny paint or a surface that has not been properly keyed. Without proper preparation, the filler cannot bond to the panel. This can lead to bubbling, paint reactions and eventual flaking as the filler begins to separate from the body.

Poor grinding preparation is another issue. Before filler is applied, the repair area and the edges of the ground section should be properly levelled. If the edges are left uneven and the technician tries to hide them with filler, the repaired area may still reveal the grinding marks once the area has dried and been finished. This is especially noticeable under paint.

Finally, dust control is often underestimated. After the filler has been sanded into shape, all sanding dust should be blown out and removed from the repaired area. Dust can settle in small holes and crevices and could be missed during cleaning. Once primer and paint are applied, trapped dust can cause reactions, bubbles and flaking.

These mistakes highlight the importance of discipline in every stage of the reparation. A quality finish is not achieved only in the spray booth. It begins with correct mixing, clean preparation, careful sanding and attention to detail before the first coat of primer is applied.

Visit Our Website at www.bodyshopnews.africa to watch the videos.

Omnia Panelbeaters is situated at 127 Terrace Road, Sebenza, Edenvale and can be contacted on 011 609 0695.


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FROM THE UK

WITH HEATHER GRANT

A New Prime Minister, Higher Repair Costs For EVs, Consumers Using AI To Shop For Motor Insurance

It's too soon to say what the UK's latest Prime Minister's policies will be regarding the automotive trade as – at the time of writing – he has only recently come to power. However, automotive industry groups and transport analysts have urged Andy Burnham to review the 2030 ban for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars, along with the proposed pay-per-mile tax for electric vehicles.

The Zero Emission (ZEV) Mandate currently requires car manufacturers to increase the number of electric vehicles they sell each year, with at least 33 per cent of new sales needing to be electric this year before moving to 100 per cent by 2035. Between 2030 and 2035, certain new hybrid and plug-in hybrid cars may still be sold if they meet specific zero-emission targets.

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) is hopeful that Andy Burnham will recognise the fundamental role of the automotive sector in the UK economy. "Despite pre-election promises to put the motor industry at the heart of its plans for growth, the Labour government has, to date, repeatedly overlooked the sector in policy, and the consequences are becoming critical," said the IMI.

Electric vehicle repair costs (for non-fault accidents) were 19 per cent higher than internal combustion engine vehicles.

"We congratulate Andy Burnham on becoming Prime Minister and we genuinely welcome his stated commitment to re-industrialisation and to technical and vocational skills," said Nick Connor, CEO of the IMI.

"The Labour Party's 2023 pre-election commitment was for a dedicated automotive strategy that encompassed manufacturing, aftermarket, supply chain and workforce development. That has not been evident to date. The IMI is calling for recognition that a sector employing 866,000 people and generating £37 billion in annual GVA cannot be treated as a footnote within a broader manufacturing category and should take a central role in a re-industrialisation strategy."



Nick Connor. *Credit: LinkedIn*



Prime Minister Andy Burnham. *Credit: Kirsty O'Connor / No 10 Downing Street*

EV REPAIR COSTS HIGHER

The AX Repair Index has revealed that electric vehicle repair costs (for non-fault accidents) were 19 per cent higher than internal combustion engine vehicles, with EVs spending nine per cent longer in the workshop.

Drawing on data from more than 40,000 accidents handled annually through AX's nationwide repair network, the research compares EVs with ICE vehicles including petrol, diesel and hybrid powertrains. Analysis of repairs completed during the last 12 months found that EV repairs cost an average of £6,363 compared with £5,338 for ICE vehicles, while repair durations averaged 25 days for EVs and 23 days for ICE vehicles. The findings come as electric vehicle adoption continues to grow in the UK.

Scott Hamilton-Cooper, Chief Commercial Officer of AX, said: "The growth of electric vehicles is creating

"For consumers, this likely means higher motor insurance premiums over the next two years as insurers look to restore margins."

new opportunities and challenges for the accident repair sector. While the gap between EV and ICE repairs is narrowing as repairers gain experience and technology improves, our AX Repair Index shows that electric vehicles still place a greater overall burden on the repair process. This is partly due to more costly EV parts and because they usually require calibration even for small repairs.

"What's important is that the industry continues investing in skills, equipment and repair capability."

INSURANCE LOSSES CONTINUE

The UK motor insurance market is forecast to remain loss-making over 2026 and 2027, according to EY's latest analysis. The deteriorating outlook is expected to have a knock-on effect on premiums, with rates set to rise over the next two years.

Following a profitable 2024 of 98 per cent net combined ratio (NCR), the market fell back into the red in 2025, with EY estimating a final NCR of 102 per cent. Greater losses are anticipated this year, with an NCR of 108 per cent forecast.

The weaker outlook is mainly due to premium rate reductions since late 2024, which are now feeding through to earned premium, alongside continued claims inflation.

Ongoing tension in the Middle East could materially affect insurer profitability. Increasing oil price volatility and supply chain disruption will likely create additional pressure on repair, parts and logistics costs, with the potential for NCRs to increase by five to ten per cent.

Dan Beard, UK Insurance Partner at EY, said UK motor insurers are navigating a difficult combination of lower earned premium income and persistent cost



Scott Hamilton-Cooper. *Credit: LinkedIn*



Dan Beard. *Credit: LinkedIn*

inflation, with geopolitical tensions adding further complexity.

"Our latest analysis suggests 2026 could be the toughest year of the current soft cycle, with profitability coming under further pressure before some expected improvement in 2027 as pricing actions feed through. For consumers, this likely means higher motor insurance premiums over the next two years as insurers look to restore margins," said Beard.

Almost one third (30 per cent) of UK tradespeople have considered quitting their job over the past 12 months as they work longer hours than ever before.

UNSUSTAINABLE WORKING HOURS

Are you working too hard? Apparently, almost one third (30 per cent) of UK tradespeople have considered quitting their job over the past 12 months as they work longer hours than ever before, new research by Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles reveals.

The UK's tradespeople are working an average of 9.44 hours per day, up almost 10 per cent or 51 minutes compared to the 2022 average of 8.59 hours per day. This equals almost one extra month of work a year.

These longer working hours are having the most profound effect on 18- to 24-year-olds, with as many as 45 per cent saying they're ready to quit due to working pressures. This is causing 44 per cent to regularly stress about their work/life balance and 39 per cent to have concern about constant overworking.

CONSUMERS USING AI TO FIND INSURANCE

Nearly one in five home insurance shoppers are using AI to shop around, a level that already rivals telephone shopping and brokers – two channels that insurers have spent decades building distribution around. It's the single most striking figure in Consumer Intelligence's latest Insurance Behaviour Tracker data and it comes from a channel the team has only just started measuring.

"Our Insurance Behaviour Tracker has run monthly since 2008, surveying thousands of consumers each month across Motor and Home insurance to capture how they shop, switch and experience renewal," said Consumer Intelligence.

"We added AI tools and assistants as a selectable shopping channel for the first time in the April 2026 survey. That first reading already shows 18.7 per cent of home insurance shoppers and 13 per cent of motor shoppers using AI, a level that wasn't visible in the tracker before now not because it wasn't happening, but because we weren't yet asking the question.

"The headline shopping and switching numbers across the market have been remarkably static this year – premiums stabilising, behaviour barely shifting. AI doesn't fit that pattern. Rather than a channel quietly building momentum over time, its first reading looks closer to a disruption – a shopping method already operating at broker/telephone-like scale, uncovered the moment we started measuring it, in a market where every other channel has flatlined."

Based in the UK, Heather Grant has written about the collision repair industry since 1999. She became Editor of UK magazine 'BodyShop' in 2000, and after 10 years moved on to become a freelance journalist writing for a wide range of magazines including 'Motor Industry Magazine', 'Repair & Refinish Review' and 'Body' magazine. After serving as Editor of 'Auto Body Professional' by ABP Club since 2015, Heather continues to write features for them and contributes to other industry publications including *BodyShop News.*



FROM THE DESK OF SAMBRA

SAMBRA Steps Up OHS Support As Compliance Pressure Grows

There is increasing pressure on businesses to demonstrate that their OHS systems are properly implemented and understood by employees as well as being actively managed.



J Hanekom SAMBRA National Director

The South African Motor Body Repairers' Association (SAMBRA) is stepping up support for members as occupational health and safety (OHS) compliance comes under increasing scrutiny from regulators and insurers.

With more Department of Employment and Labour inspections taking place and insurers placing greater emphasis on OHS compliance within their approved networks, SAMBRA has commissioned a dedicated OHS support project to help members manage their compliance obligations.

"Occupational health and safety compliance is no longer something businesses can afford to treat as an administrative exercise that sits in a





file," says Juan Hanekom, OHS Support for Members at SAMBRA. "There is increasing pressure on businesses to demonstrate that their OHS systems are properly implemented and understood by employees as well as being actively managed."

As part of the initiative, participating SAMBRA members will receive a comprehensive OHS Compliance File designed to support the implementation and ongoing management of their workshop OHS requirements.

Members will also have access to unlimited online compliance training for employees for a fixed three-month period, at no additional cost.

The training covers a range of important compliance areas, including SHE induction, ergonomic regulations, basic firefighting and First Aid renewals.

"This initiative is about making compliance more practical and accessible for our members," says Hanekom. "Smaller businesses, in particular, often face significant time, cost and administrative pressures when trying to keep up with changing compliance requirements. By providing the tools and training through the Association, we can help members strengthen their OHS systems without having to carry the full burden individually."

This initiative is about making compliance more practical and accessible for our members.

The initiative is also designed to help members prepare for regulatory inspections and respond to the growing OHS expectations of insurers and other industry stakeholders.

The OHS Compliance Files have already been distributed to SAMBRA regions, with Area Representatives now delivering them directly to participating members.

Hanekom says the project demonstrates the practical value of belonging to an industry association.

"SAMBRA's role is not only to represent the interests of the motor body repair industry, but also to find practical solutions that help members operate more effectively and compliantly. This project is a good example of how the collective strength of the Association can provide access to resources that would otherwise represent a significant cost and administrative burden for individual businesses."

The initiative forms part of SAMBRA's ongoing commitment to providing practical support that helps members manage regulatory requirements, reduce business risk and operate to relevant industry standards.

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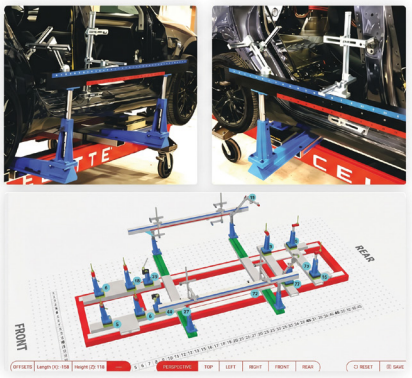
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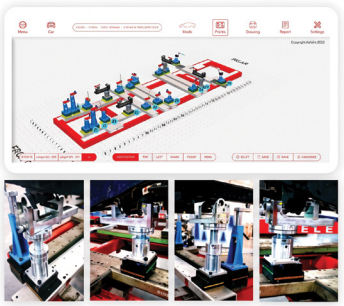
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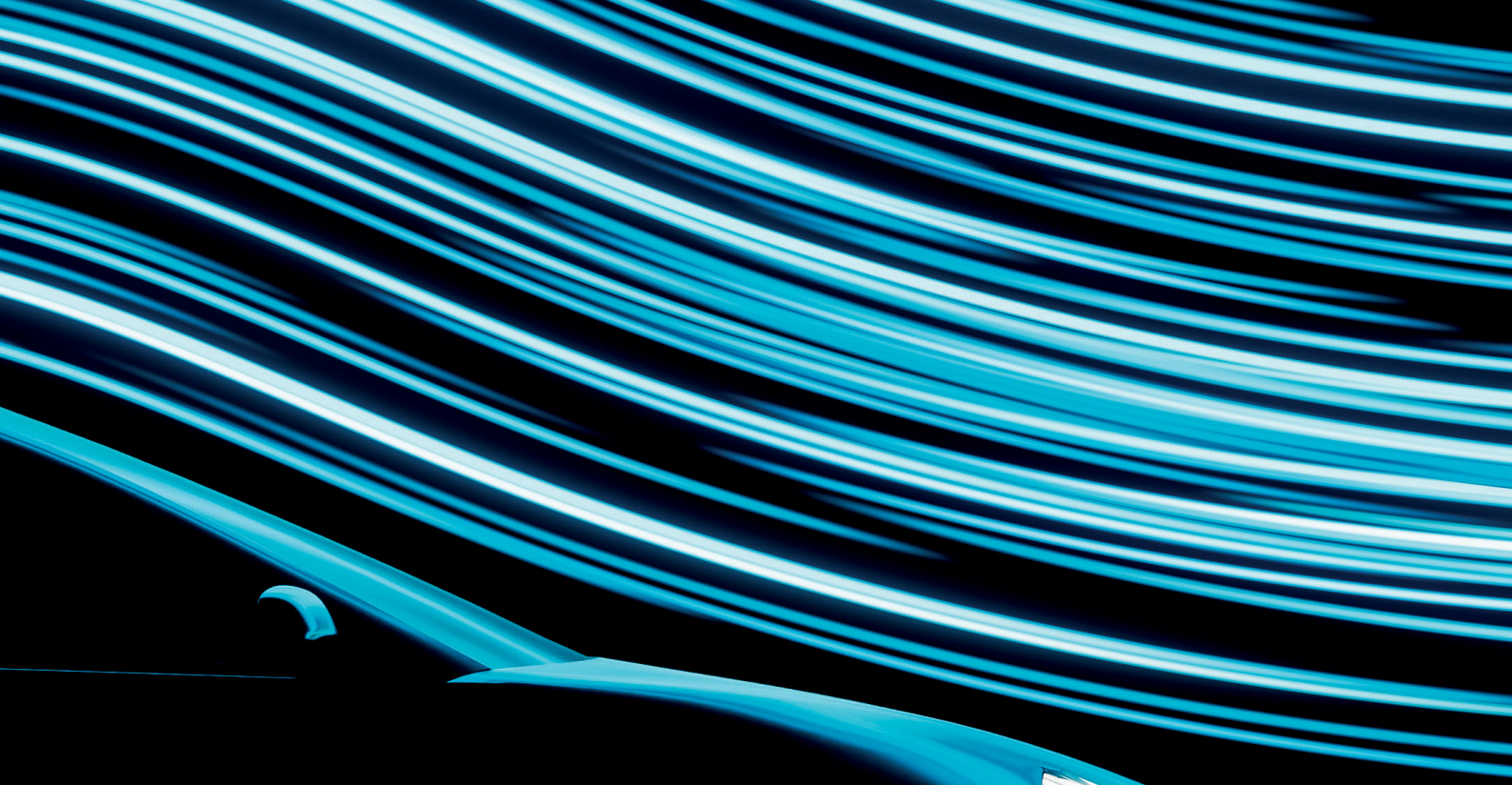
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