8 September, 2022

**ISUZU WELCOMES JOBS SUMMIT OUTCOMES**

Isuzu Australia Limited (IAL) welcomes news of an increase in the number of fee-free TAFE places announced at last week’s national Jobs and Skills Summit in Canberra.

IAL National Service Manager Brett Stewart said he was very happy with the government’s announcement of an [extra $1 billion in funding for fee-free TAFE places](https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/Jobs-and-Skills-Summit-Outcomes-Document.pdf), with an extra 180,000 places to be delivered next year, and an [increase of the migration cap to 195,000](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/sep/02/australia-raises-permanent-migration-cap-to-195000-to-ease-workforce-shortages) this year.

“As we all know, the skills shortage has been affecting the road transport industry, with qualified drivers and mechanics in short supply,” Mr Stewart said.

“IAL is keen to see some real solutions being rolled out in the wake of the jobs and skills summit.”

Earlier this year, Australia’s National Skills Commission said its [latest assessment of skill shortages](https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/insights/skill-shortages-and-labour-market-tightness-global-perspective) found that 42 per cent of technician and trade occupations are in shortage, compared to 19 per cent of all occupations in shortage.

Isuzu has several programs to attract, upskill and retain staff, including apprentices.

According to the latest research by National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), one third of all first-year apprentices and trainees do not complete their training.

In its [Completion and Attrition Rates for Apprentices and Trainees 2021 report](https://ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/completion-and-attrition-rates-for-apprentices-and-trainees-2021), released on August 11, the NCVER said that less than half of the apprenticeships begun in Australia in 2017 were completed.

Two innovative Melbourne-based Isuzu truck dealerships teamed up to do their bit to combat that startling rate of apprenticeship dropouts. A group of 12 apprentices are now more than halfway through their first year at the [Westar and Patterson Cheney Apprentice Academy](https://content.isuzu.com.au/news-media/apprenticeship-academy-takes-the-lead/).

Under the Academy program, apprentices partake in a range of paid work and training and attend TAFE together every two months.  They can become either qualified heavy commercial vehicle technician or an auto electrician, with training in all areas of the service and pre-delivery areas.

The apprentices also can obtain a forklift licence, first aid qualifications, a truck licence, Certificate II Automotive Air Conditioning and Arctic A/C refrigerant handling licence.

Another exciting Isuzu program is the [Isuzu National Technical Skills Competition](https://content.isuzu.com.au/news-media/isuzu-techs-set-to-take-on-the-world/), which pits technicians and apprentices against each other in a friendly battle of skills. The two winners of this year’s national competition will compete against technicians from 40 different countries in the international event later this year, the I-1Grand Prix (I1GP).

Eight apprentices and eight Isuzu technicians travelled to Isuzu’s head office in Melbourne in August for the national competition, which this year took the form of a one-hour written exam and a one-hour on-vehicle exercise.

With a focus on the skills shortage and building career pathways, IAL this year introduced the apprentice category, as well as a State of Origin component into the skills competition as a way of progressing their technicians and adding some home state pride.

Isuzu also forged a super-charged [partnership with the Walkinshaw Andretti United](https://content.isuzu.com.au/news-media/thrilling-opportunity-for-top-rate-isuzu-techs/) V8 Supercar racing team, giving five Isuzu truck technicians the opportunity to join pit crews at this year’s Repco Supercars Championship.

The technicians worked alongside the official pit crew on race days around Australia, holding their own with the best of the best.

“The pit crew program is part of Isuzu’s focus on building the skills and incentivising the roles of Isuzu technicians, the people who keep Isuzu’s Australian fleet on the road,” Mr Stewart said.

“A job as a heavy vehicle technician can [open many doors](https://content.isuzu.com.au/news-media/more-than-a-job-finding-a-future-in-the-truck-industry/); building skills is a lifelong pursuit and Isuzu is dedicated to investing in their technicians today so that they can lead in the future.”

The national skills shortage needs to be tackled on a number of fronts, and Mr Stewart said IAL welcomes any meaningful program that will help.

**Ends
For further information, please contact:**         **For Isuzu Trucks releases and photos:**

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