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**SUSPENSEFUL WAIT FOR INTERNATIONAL ISUZU COMPETITION RESULTS**

Australia’s top two Isuzu technicians face a suspenseful two-week wait to find out how they fared in the prestigious Isuzu International Technical Grand Prix - the I-1GP.

Tamworth’s Brad Hickey and Bendigo’s Louis Holt competed in the gruelling competition from Isuzu Australia Limited’s (IAL’s) Melbourne headquarters on November 4, undertaking a written exam, a series of 10-minute virtual diagnostic challenges and a practical task on a real Isuzu truck.

“It was pretty tough,” said Louis, the workshop foreman at Poyser’s Trucks in Bendigo.

“The technical knowledge exam was probably the hardest. They threw some real curveballs in there.”

Brad, from Double R trucks in Tamworth, and Louis took out the top honours in the Isuzu [National Technical Skills Competition](https://content.isuzu.com.au/news-media/putting-isuzu-trucks-best-to-the-test/) in July, beating more than 60 contenders from across Isuzu Australia’s expansive dealer network.

**INTENSIVE TRAINING**

What followed was three months of intensive training with a panel of IAL experts, including New South Wales Technical Service Manager Jeff Berry, this year’s official Australian I1GP coach.

Mr Berry said he was blown away by the dedication of the two technicians, who studied at home and attended a three-week intensive training session at IAL’s headquarters in Truganina.

“They came to us as very good technicians,” he said.

“They’ll go back to their workplace as excellent technicians, some of the best the world has to offer in the technical market.”

Mr Berry said the I1GP was “the pinnacle” of IAL’s comprehensive training program, which included the National Technical Skills Competition, Master Technician programs and incentive schemes such as the [Isuzu technician Supercar pit crew experience](https://content.isuzu.com.au/news-media/thrilling-opportunity-for-top-rate-isuzu-techs/).

“We’ve got our state-of-the-art training facility in Melbourne and our trainers travel across the countryside visiting the entire dealer network,” he said. “That training is just essential and it’s first-rate.”

**ROBUST FUTURE**

“These events are excellent drawcards that really do show that Isuzu as a manufacturer, coupled with our dealer network, have got a good plan and a good robust future,” he said.

The I1GP was once again an online event this year, and this is the reason for the long delay between the day of the competition and the results being announced.

The I1GP judges at Isuzu Motors Limited in Japan, must scrutinise hundreds of hours of video footage of contestants from 60 countries performing the virtual failure tests, and each country’s team event: diagnosing all the problems on a real-life N-Series (Elf) truck.

Mr Berry said IAL had set up a simulation of the Japanese event the day before the I1GP at Westar Trucks Derrimut in Melbourne’s west.

“Normally when they head to Japan there’s 1,000 people watching them live, and the stakes are very high,” he said.

Brad and Louis were “thrown under the bus” and presented with a N-Series truck that wouldn’t start. They were given a limited time to diagnose the faults under the watchful eyes of Westar Trucks staff.

**CONFIDENT COMPETITORS**

After that stressful live event, Brad and Louis had a relaxed start to competition day, which started with a few rounds of basketball with their coaches at IAL headquarters.

“Once we got underway, we started with the technical knowledge exam, which was pretty tough,” Brad said.

“Then we did the virtual failure diagnostics, which I was lucky enough to fix both of the the problems. Then we did the team comp, me and Louis just running around and trying to find everything that was wrong with this little truck here.”

Both technicians thanked their workplaces and families for supporting them through the extensive preparation for the international competition.

“I have to thank work, and me missus for just putting up with me not doing my normal sort of things I usually do, I just locked myself in a room and studied,” Brad said.

“When I go back home, I’ve got to go back to being a dad again!”

**WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES**

Both competitors recommended all Isuzu technicians enter future events.

“I can’t recommend it enough. It doesn’t really matter where you’re from, where you grew up or what workshop you’re working in,” Brad said.

“Both of us are from small regional dealers, we’re not from the big city dealers with all the resourcing.”

The competition also highlighted the opportunities available to Isuzu technicians.

“Sometimes there’s a perception out that that if you’re a mechanic, you’re stuck in that same job for life but sometimes it can be a real stepping-stone to bigger and better things,” Brad said.

“If you don’t want to be on the tools all your life and you’re technically minded, there’s avenues. You could maybe get a management job at Isuzu, maybe become a trainer!”

**ends**

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