



MEDIA RELEASE

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Apprentice Excellence Recognised as Award Finalists Announced

MTA Institute apprentices from across the State have been recognised for their skills and dedication to the automotive sector, with the Motor Trades Association of Queensland (MTA Queensland) announcing the finalists for the 2021 Apprentice of the Year award.

The illustrious Apprentice of the Year award is presented to an MTA Institute student who has displayed excellence and passion and has gone above and beyond in their commitment to training. The Apprentice of the Year will be crowned at the MTA Queensland Industry Awards Gala on Saturday, 20th November in Brisbane.

With over 2,200 apprentices currently training at the MTA Institute, the award is hotly contested and remains the highlight of the annual signature event hosted by MTA Queensland.

The 2021 winner will take home a 218-piece automotive starter toolkit, valued at \$3,299 thanks to Milwaukee Tool, who has partnered as the official tool sponsor for the award. Each finalist will not leave empty handed as Milwaukee Tool will supply the runners-up with a socket set valued at \$499. The winner will also be treated to a two-week work experience opportunity at Triple Eight Race Engineering.

The finalists for the Apprentice of the Year award are:

- **Igor Do Nascimento**, who recently completed his Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology with Mackay Diesel Centre
- **Jamie Lenkeit**, who recently completed his Certificate III Outdoor Power Equipment with Waldo's Mobile Mower Doctor, Bundaberg

Motor Trades Association of Queensland

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- **Jake Kither**, who recently completed his Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology with Browns Autobahn, Nambour
- **Keith Forstman**, who recently completed his Certificate III Automotive Refinishing Technology with Flight Marine, Gold Coast
- **Ryan Smoothey**, a third-year Certificate III Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology apprentice with East Coast Truck & Trailer in Gympie
- **Samuel Hennings**, who recently completed his Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology with Brisbane 4WD, Nudgee
- **Joshua Frampton**, a fourth-year Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology apprentice with Cricks Maroochydore
- **Klarah Cassar-Tan**, a third-year Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology apprentice with Mercedes-Benz Sunshine Coast
- **Jake Chitham**, who recently completed his Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology with Jax Tyres in Toowoomba
- **Curtis Vidulich**, a third-year Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology apprentice with Three Point Classic in Mount Gravatt
- **Dion Brown**, who recently completed his Certificate III Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology with Toowong Mazda
- **Joshua Middlebrook**, who recently completed his Certificate III Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology with BMAS Biloela

MTA Group CEO Rod Camm said, "It is a fantastic outcome to see apprentices recognised from all corners of the State and from a wide range of automotive qualifications. It shows the breadth of our industry and that the commitment to building skills for the future is evidence across metropolitan and regional Queensland. It is a pleasure to see the strong calibre of students we have coming through the industry.

"With the automotive industry continuing to experience severe skills shortages, it is imperative that we celebrate the incredible successes of our outstanding apprentices and continue to promote opportunities and pathways for such individuals.

"I applaud each finalist on their achievements to this point and look forward to following their careers with interest as they progress into the industry as qualified tradespeople."

MTA Queensland would like to thank platinum even supporters Spirit Super, BUSY At Work, and Capricorn for their support of the Industry Awards Gala.

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Background:

The Motor Trades Association of Queensland (**MTA Queensland**) is the peak body representing the interests of employers in the retail, repair, and service sectors of Queensland's automotive industry. MTA Queensland has been performing its vital representative role for the automotive industry since 1929. In Queensland there are some 15,500 automotive businesses employing more than 90,000 people, that generate more than \$20 billion annually. The Association represents and promotes issues of relevance to all levels of government. In 2019 MTA Queensland was announced as an ABA100 winner in The Australian Business Awards and a finalist in the Lord Mayor's Business Awards, for Business Innovation.

The **MTA Institute (RTO 31529)** is the leading automotive training provider in Queensland offering nationally recognised training, covering technical, retail and the aftermarket sectors of the automotive industry. The MTA Institute is the largest independent automotive training provider in Queensland, employing experienced trainers who are geographically dispersed from Cairns to the Gold Coast and Toowoomba to Emerald. In the last year, the MTA Institute delivered accredited courses to more than 2,000 students. The MTA Institute is the first trade RTO in Australia to be approved under the ITECA Industry Certification Program and was the winner of the Small Training Provider of the Year at the 2019 Queensland Training Awards.

MTAiQ, Australia's first automotive innovation hub established by MTA Queensland in 2017, is an eco-system that supports innovation and research for the motor trades.

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