



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Deception Bay Apprentice Named State's Top Automotive Talent

Business owners, entrepreneurs, and apprentices from across Queensland have been recognised for their excellence and commitment to the Queensland automotive industry at the 2023 Motor Trades Association of Queensland's (MTA Queensland) Industry Awards Gala on Saturday, 11th November.

Highlighting the incredible accomplishments of MTA Institute (RTO. 31529) apprentices over the last 12 months, the 2023 Apprentice of the Year award was hotly contested, with 12 incredible apprentices from around Queensland in the running.

Taking home the prestigious award was fourth year AUR30320 - Certificate III in Automotive Electrical Technology apprentice **Melissa Smith** from Crank Auto Electrics and Air Conditioning in Deception Bay, Brisbane.

Nominated for the Apprentice of the Year award by MTA Institute Technical Trainer Roger West for her dedication to delivering the highest quality service and possessing an attention to detail that is second to none, Melissa is completing her apprenticeship while doubling as the owner of Crank Auto Electrics and Air Conditioning together with her husband.

As the winner of the Apprentice of the Year Award, Melissa receives a 218-piece Automotive Starter Toolkit from Tool Sponsor Milwaukee Tools, as well as an all-expenses paid opportunity to spend one week completing work experience at the newly renovated Penrite Racing Team Workshop in Melbourne courtesy of Apprentice Experience Sponsor Gates Corporation.

Motor Trades Association of Queensland

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MTA Institute Director Marcello Riotto said, "With more than 2,500 students training with the MTA Institute across Queensland, the Apprentice of the Year award is a significant opportunity to acknowledge the individual's delivering excellence in all aspects of their apprenticeship and leading the way as the future of the automotive industry.

"It fills me with pride to be able to honour Melissa, who is a true trailblazing woman in the automotive industry, forging ahead in a male-dominated space as both an apprentice and a business owner. With the completion of her apprenticeship firmly in her sights, I look forward to following her career with interest, and wish her all the best for her experience in Melbourne early next year."

In the evening's other awards, the inaugural Small Business Award for Excellence was awarded to **The Garage Miami**, while the Large Business Award for Excellence was won by **AMA Group**. Townsville-based **Alexander Body Works** took out the Community Award, **British Off Road** won the Innovation Award, and **Hatice Hutchinson**, owner of All Car Engine Reconditioning Services in Yatala was presented with the Woman in Industry Award.

MTA Queensland would like to thank platinum supporters Spirit Super and Capricorn for their support of the 2023 Industry Awards Gala.

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Attached Images:

1. 2023 MTA Queensland Apprentice of the Year Winner Melissa Smith, pictured with MTA Institute Chair Terri Butler (left), MTA Institute Director Marcello Riotto (middle left), and Gates Corporation Business Development Manager James Forno (right)

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 16,000 automotive businesses employing more than 90,000 people, that generate more than \$7.24 billion to the state economy annually. The automotive industry is estimated to contribute \$37 billion to the Australian economy each year. 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

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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 ecosystem that supports innovation and research for the motor trades.

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