



Andrew Tucker, Owner/Operator of Tucker Automotive.

ONE MAN SHOW

Andrew Tucker has continued the traditions established by his father Ron in running Tuckers Automotive as a solo entity – he is the business, whether it is taking bookings, servicing or invoicing.

The firm was founded in 1962 at Lockleys, before transferring to Plympton North in the late 1980s – and Tucker Automotive has been a member of the MTA for almost as long as the business, joining in 1963.

“I was 16 when I began here, virtually following in the footsteps of Dad and Paul,” said Andrew. “It’s always been a family concern.”

“Since Paul left in 2001, it’s been just me, just as it was when dad started.

“While it may seem like a huge challenge, it’s been a good business to work in. There is a lot to do that I find interesting. In fact, there isn’t anything about the work that I don’t like.

“There is a lot of freedom, and the work gives me a lot of satisfaction, as it’s all about the customer and helping to ensure their vehicles run well and are reliable.”

Each week Andrew averages about 15 cars and four-wheel drive jobs, and occasionally works on trucks.

Return customers are the norm, with one lady first using the company in 1968 when she brought in her Toyota Corona – today she drives a Toyota Yaris.

Compared to when he first started in the business, Andrew has incorporated many improvements in how he goes about his

working day, with his ability to continue to ‘keep up’ with change being part of the reason for his success.

“It’s actually a lot easier today, as there aren’t any of those huge oil leaks, there’s not that stinky smell of yesteryear,” he said.

“And cars drive better, are safer, more reliable, especially overcoming those early morning stalling problems of the old days, and they are so much more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly now.

“Cars are much nicer nowadays and a lot better finished product compared to 30 years ago. Perhaps the major negatives are they are more expensive to fix. They can be a victim of their own modern technical wonders at times when things go wrong.

“Changes include issues such as the electronics, which really are pretty interesting and challenging.

“It’s about research and applying what you learn. I love modern technology and I love the way my work has evolved with the different types of vehicles.”

The oldest car Andrew has worked on was an FJ Holden – albeit around 30-years-ago – when he did an engine rebuild and general repairs.

Whether it’s a cheap runaround or a high-end 200 Series Landcruiser or Lexus, Andrew is just as happy working on keeping the car safe and sound for its owner.

For him, it’s the same challenge, no matter the car, no matter



the customer, as he brings tremendous pride in applying his experience to the job at hand.

"Whenever a customer comes in, it's about determining the best outcome, with cost a major factor, whether it's a simple service or even just changing tyres, up to any major work," Andrew said.

"First, I talk to the customer to find out their concerns, as the more info I have the quicker and cheaper it is to fix. It's a process of elimination to determine what action to take."

Looking to the future, he takes a refreshingly pragmatic approach. "I have a job I'll keep on going with until the day the changes in cars go past me, which is when I will retire, although that will not be for many more years"

PERSONAL LIFE

Andrew used to race at Mallala for many years, competing in around 100 races but only won once, which just so happened to be the 1998 state championship, in Formula V.

With his wife Celena, he hosts exchange students from all over the world.

"We have had students come stay with us from Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, France, Scandinavia and Japan, and all stay for around six months," he said.

"Most are aged between 15-17 and go to local high schools – we get a lot of satisfaction helping to guide young people, to see them evolve and grow.

"They are on cultural exchanges but none really have any interest in working on cars."

On the agenda for the Tuckers is some travel of their own, and

they intend visiting some of the places where their exchange students hail from. At least accommodation will not be a problem!

Recently Andrew prepared a 2004 Magna for some youngsters from Denmark to travel around Australia – Adelaide to Melbourne, up to Cairns, across to Northern Territory and back via Alice Springs – with their safe return indicative of his high-quality workmanship.

With his work often physically demanding, Andrew stays in shape by riding a bicycle to work each day and at special events, including the Coast-to-Coast and the Tour Down Under community events.

"There are so many things in life that interest me and that I love to be involved with. My job is something that I have a lot of pride in and love everything about, so I consider myself an extremely lucky man," Andrew said.

MTA SUPPORT

"The MTA is a strong support mechanism for the entire trade, and for the retail customers - even though many consumers are really not aware what the MTA do behind the scenes in keeping them safe and supporting the industry.

"A big issue at the moment is access to repair information. It's vital for our trade to have access to information on all modern systems in vehicles, as this gives the customers a choice as to who they can get their car repaired by.

"This competition is overall a good thing for the automotive industry, promoting higher standards of workmanship and better education for the existing and newer generations coming into the trade."