

The CRC STAR Awards

The 2009 CRC Program STAR Award was presented to the CRC for Advanced Automotive Technology (AutoCRC) in Canberra by the Minister For Innovation, Industry, Science And Research Senator Kim Carr on 26 May. Another recipient of the award was the Environmental Biotechnology CRC.

“These organisations show us the limitless potential of strong partnerships between researchers and industry. Through cutting-edge research these CRCs have helped make Australia internationally competitive in biotechnology and high-tech manufacturing,” Senator Carr said.

The award to AutoCRC was in recognition of the Automotive Supplier Excellence Australia program (ASEA). The aim of ASEA is to support Australian component suppliers in competing internationally, and accessing global automotive supply chains. The three stages of the program were identifying the key success factors for global competitiveness, benchmarking the performance of 63 companies against those factors - and developing action plans to bring key areas of those businesses up to global standard.

ASEA received strong unified support from the Australian automotive industry, including funding from Ford, GM Holden, Toyota and Mitsubishi, the Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers and the Australian, Victorian and South Australian governments.

The particular focus for the CRC STAR award was the high level engagement of the ASEA program with SMEs. A good example is Geelong-based components supplier Backwell IXL, who participated strongly in the ASEA program and achieved excellent gains in productivity - as well as identifying new opportunities for growth.

AutoCRC’s CEO Dr Matthew Cuthbertson explains that the pilot of ASEA stage three (with 27 companies participating) is still in progress and hopes ASEA can expand to support all the companies involved in stages one and two.

“Our mission is to ensure the automotive industry in Australia is vital and strong so that when there is an upturn in the economy, they will be ready,” Cuthbertson said.

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