

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING GROWTH CENTRE

MEMBER PROFILE



Plastfix was established in 2016 and is a fast-growing automotive plastics repair specialist.

Various additive manufacturing methods are reshaping industries as varied as aerospace, footwear and healthcare. Plastfix founder Mario Dimovski, a veteran of the automotive collision repair industry with three decades' experience, believes they will do the same for his sector.

Though Plastfix has expanded rapidly in Australia and New Zealand, growing to 40 employees in 18 months, it is part of an industry that is dealing with challenges of consolidation, inefficient sourcing of parts, and workforce problems.

Dimovski this year founded a new startup company – Tradiebot Industries – to partner with research institutions and the industry to develop and commercialise solutions for the sector, taking advantage of Industry 4.0 technologies.

“We’re looking at additive manufacturing, material and automation solutions incorporating advanced data analytics to improve repair processes, reduce the quantity of plastic parts ending up in landfill and develop a smarter workforce,” Dimovski said.

“We’re also looking at how we can smooth the impact of our new solutions on workplaces, by exploring the use of augmented and virtual reality in training both prospective new staff as well as the existing workforce, so they are upskilled now better and faster and ready for the jobs of the future.”

The idea of automation replacing jobs in collision repair is not an issue, as the sector faces severe jobs shortages. Tradiebot's new technologies, will at the same time create demand for jobs that had simply never existed before.

Part of the skills issue arises from an undeserved stigma attached to trades, believes Dimovski, even though such jobs can be lucrative, fulfilling and thoroughly modern. He says there is a local shortage of panel beaters and spray painters that can be measured in the thousands, and this is to some extent the industry's fault for not telling its story well enough.

“Some of the new age collision repair shops today are multimillion-dollar operations with state-of-the-art equipment and technology and they all look like value dealerships,” he offers.

Of the AMGC, Dimovski says the group has been enormously helpful in moving towards Plastfix's goals.

“Joining is I think it is the best thing we could have done,” he says.

“I think anyone looking into that innovation or automation or expansion or just reinventing their company, I think it is a great first step to say ‘what can we do?’ And the AMGC will ask, ‘What can we do, how can we help?’ And they have world-class knowledge there, but also a great network of contacts they can tap into.”





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Mario Dimovski, Founder