

# GRIP



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**CROCKER TAKES  
TEN FROM TEN, AS  
ATKINSON SHOWS  
HIS TALENT**  
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## Patroni Australia's Ichi-ban - now for the world

**Derek Ashby, National Manager  
Customer and Technical Services**

Over so many months, and years, stories have been written about Subaru's incredible sales success.

And while the people in the showrooms physically sell the cars, Subaru knows that without the work of strong and dedicated aftersales operations, on-going sales success would not occur.

The men and women in the service centres around the country are every bit as much the heroes as their front-of-house colleagues in the Australian Subaru success story.

Early in August, at the new Subaru National Technical Training Centre at Sydney's Eastern Creek, an event was held of both national and international status, where 19 technicians with over 120 years of Subaru experience between them came together to compete to find the Ichi-ban technician in four categories.

Simply, the goal was to find the best of the best.

To earn their place in the Stars Awards program for 2007, the technicians submitted an entry in the qualifying exam published on Subaru Central in July.

From more than 100 entries, the top three apprentices, four technicians, four advanced

### Congratulations to category winners:

**Jonothan Keppie – Hunter Subaru – Ichi-ban Apprentice**  
**Daniel Ceeley – Rolfe Classic Subaru – Ichi-ban Technician**  
**Michael Cooper – Subaru Rushcutters Bay – Ichi-ban Advanced Technician**  
**Andrew Patroni – City Subaru Newstead – Ichi-ban Master Technician**

### New Zealand overall winner

**Rick Wheeler – Armstrong Subaru Hamilton**

technicians and five master technicians were selected to join the Stars Awards final competition.

Joining the 16 Australians were three of New Zealand's best technicians, ready to compete to represent their country.

To officially open the week's events, the team met for dinner at the Waterfront restaurant at the Rocks. With the iconic Harbour Bridge as a backdrop, the group enjoyed a relaxed, informal dinner with the Subaru technical team. Spirits were high, and everyone was looking forward to the coming competition.

The following day everyone was treated to a sneak peek at the all-new MY08 Impreza, with some technical training on the features of the new car, and a prelude

to the course being rolled out during September across the country.

After wrapping up the training early, everyone packed up and went to Eastern Creek Karts for a go-kart grand prix. It was here that the competitiveness started to shine through.

A special mention must go to David Johnstone from Keystar Subaru, who brought his own special \$2000 helmet. Yes, it did help him cross the line first, but the score sheet shows who had the quickest lap time.

There were many cases of inappropriate black flags, and some wheel to wheel combat, but at the end of the finals, everyone had a blast – ALRIGHT!

After the excitement of go-karts the night before, Wednesday was a culture shock as more training was conducted, and after lunch, the business end of the week slowly crept closer. All the techs were split into



**Derek Ashby**

competition groups, and a room-by-room explanation given of what was to come.

This included a multiple choice exam, with Select monitor saved data interpretation, an interview with Mick Noon, Subaru New Zealand's Blair Read and yours truly, some on-car fault diagnosis and a mechanical section that included measurements on both automatic transmission and engine components.

The confidence of all of the men had very quickly diminished, and everyone was

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### The Stars Awards finalists

Categories	Name	Retailer
Apprentice	Tim Newton Jonathan Keppie Matthew Moller	Eblen Subaru Hunter Subaru Subaru Blue Mountains
Technician	Ben Hall Daniel Ceely Matthew Forbes Matthew Livingston	Bedser Automotive Rolfe Classic Subaru Blue Mountains Port Macquarie Subaru
Advanced Technician	Chris Ayrton Michael Cooper Michael Bye Raj Prasad	Port Macquarie Subaru Subaru Rushcutters Bay SVM Artarmon Subaru Toowong
Master Technician	Andrew Patroni Rod Hutchison David Johnstone Justin Silverthorne Tim Knight	City Subaru Subaru Toowong Keystar Subaru Bill Buckle Brookvale Quayside Subaru

### New Zealand competitors

Craig Packard - Winger Subaru Hamilton  
Rick Wheeler - Armstrong Subaru Wellington  
Fraser Smith - Armstrong Subaru Christchurch



**Andrew Patroni (right) and General Manager FHI Overseas Service Mr Takahara.**

## Patroni Australia's Ichi-ban (Cont. from page 1)

sent back to the Travelodge Blacktown for an early night to prepare for the next day.

Each session on Thursday was 45 minutes, with the first five minutes spent ensuring that everyone understood their task, followed by 40 minutes of intense competition.

Each room was filled with adjudicators following every move of the technicians, and marking scores on their progress. We had an official photographer covering the event, and Mr Takahara, General Manager, Overseas Service Department, Fuji Heavy Industries, was present, invited by Subaru Australia to witness first-hand the skills and dedication of both Australian and New Zealand technicians in action. He was, it should be said, suitably impressed during the day.

When the full-time hooter sounded, a huge sigh of relief was let out by all the competitors, but very quickly, everyone wanted to know where the faults lay that they didn't find.

A quick demonstration showed that some basic checks were often all that was required for the correct direction for the fault diagnosis. Hindsight is a wonderful tool, and the pressure of a competition environment has an affect on everyone's performance.

From the final competition, the scores were tallied, the judges collaborated and the winners were decided.

To announce the winners, a presentation dinner was held at the training centre attended by a group of very special guests – Takahara-san, Subaru Chairman Trevor Amery, Subaru Managing Director Nick Senior, and the Subaru executive team. Also making a special appearance, and acting as MC for the night, was television personality, and motorsport driver, Grant Denyer.

After some light-hearted banter directed

at a particular few, including Ben Hall, Grant called up each of the technicians from all categories who were presented with a \$250 cheque, a Stars Awards 2007 plaque and a gift from FHI for earning their place at the final.

The point scores were very tight, and all categories were decided by very small margins, but in the end, each category winner was presented with an additional cash reward for being the Ichi-ban in their categories.

The overall winner of the competition, and the technician who will be representing Australia in the World Technician competition in Japan in November, was Andrew Patroni. Andrew has 22 years of experience in the Subaru brand, and we are sure that he will do a stellar job against the world's best, including Rick from New Zealand.

At the end of five full days, the skid pan was used with a couple of Liberty GTs to showcase the benefits of ABS and VDC in real life situations (and for a bit more competition).

A wet motorkhana against the stopwatch was held to finish off the week.

Grant was also in attendance, doing a live cross to a Sydney breakfast television show, as was motoring journalist Peter McKay, and both provided driving tips and anecdotes from their many and varied experiences.

Just to prove that it was Andrew's week, he also took out the motorkhana prize with a smooth and controlled drive around the cones.

So, with the Stars Awards behind us again, congratulations go to Andrew, Rick and all technicians who participated in the final competition. As we said at the completion of the week, everyone was a winner, and I am sure that you all gained some experience and brand passion.

We will see you all in two years' time when we compete again.

## Subaru's STIrring sight for Frankfurt

A Subaru World Rally Car concept based on the new generation Impreza will be unveiled at Frankfurt Motor Show in September.

New Impreza is due to go on sale in Australia in September, followed by the WRX STI version around February next year.

According to Fuji Heavy Industries, the maker of Subaru vehicles, the concept "...

conjures up images of future styling trends for a world rally car".

Subaru Australia recently announced that the new Impreza range will feature three naturally-aspirated variants plus the turbocharged WRX.

The WRC concept will be unveiled in Frankfurt by Subaru World Rally Team's Petter Solberg. The show's public days run from 15-23 September.



## Tamworth top spot for junior golf

On a freezing July morning in Tamworth, more than 300 junior golfers teed off for the Subaru State Age Championships – the largest junior golf tournament in Australia.

Played over four days, the finals bring together the best junior golfers – both male and female – to compete for the top spot in their age group.

Patrick Bourke and Alicia Cannon travelled to Tamworth for the event and Chris Fren and the team at Peel Valley Motors kindly arranged vehicle displays that proved a huge hit with competitors and their parents.

With more than 150 prizes awarded on the evening, Patrick was kept busy assisting Jack with the presentations.

The event also attracted some wonderful media coverage in local and state-based publications.

Subaru Australia has recently signed a three-year sponsorship agreement with

Jack Newton Junior Golf – the organisers of this event and the benchmark for junior golf nationally with up to 6000 members aged five to 18.

Jack Newton was one of Australia's most successful professional golfers and since 1983 has set out to make sure that our young golfers have access to support programs and receive opportunities that will ensure Australia continues to be competitive on the international stage.

The J.N.J.G.F. provides the platform to introduce juniors to the game via school programs – which reach 20,000 kids statewide – as well as camps, clinics and tournaments around New South Wales.

This year was a great learning opportunity and we'll enter 2008 with more ways to involve you, the network, in this wonderful sponsorship opportunity.

To view the media clips for this event, visit the Vehicles page on Subaru Central.

Alicia Cannon



The winning technicians (from left) Andrew Patroni, Daniel Ceely, Rick Wheeler, Michael Cooper and Jonathon Keppie, and (below) the mechanical exam underway.



Jack Newton and Patrick Bourke with the Subaru State Age Championships winners.