

INFORMATION | WOMEN ON WHEELS

Ready to roll with confidence

Drivers brush up on the basics at one of North Jacklin motors' info sessions

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IT'S the stuff of horror movies. You're a woman travelling alone at night on a deserted road when your car develops a flat tyre – and you have no idea how to change it.

And it's a scenario many women who attended the 'Women on Wheels' evening hosted by North Jacklin recently wanted to ensure they were prepared for.

Service manager Aimee Mayger hosted the free, invitation-only information session designed to teach women about basic car maintenance at the company's Gordon Street showroom last Thursday, February 26.

Participants sipped pink champagne, sampled nibbles and counted the contents of their free gift bags (containing, among other things, a tyre tread gauge, Ed Hardy fragrance sample and gym membership voucher) while being entertained by a line-up of friendly, knowledgeable guest speakers.

First up, Aimee guided participants through a take-home "cheat sheet" detailing the ins and outs of everything from fluid levels (those that evaporate and need to be checked regularly; those that don't) to the perils of automatic car washes.

Bob Jane T-Mart franchisee Ri-

chard Vorst – a man who's spent a lifetime working in the tyre fitting and balancing industry – shared a wealth of handy tips, including a stern warning to "beware the killer spare". Indeed, the buckled, swollen, unroadworthy spare he'd salvaged from a customer's boot (apparently it had lain untouched for 10 years) was a lesson in itself.

On average, Richard says, an alarming number of the cars coming through his workshop are around 10lb (30 per cent) under-inflated, which can lead to vastly reduced tyre tread life. Also, interestingly, he noted that often customers who believe they are in need of a wheel alignment simply need some serious air in their tyres.

After a 'pit stop' to recharge our glasses, the reins were handed to softly-spoken mechanic Cameron McBride, who stepped participants through jump-starting a car – red's positive, black's negative – and

“Do all cars have a jack? I don't even know where mine is!”

changing a tyre.

The practical nature of these demonstrations – walking viewers through every single stage of the process, from removing the jack from the boot to harnessing your own body weight in order to loosen the wheel nuts with a tyre spanner was particularly helpful, with one participant declaring, "Do all cars have a jack? I don't even know where mine is!"

While most of us – both male and female – like to think we have at least a rudimentary mechanical knowledge (enough to get us out of trouble in an emergency, at least), it's a fact of life that, gender divisions being what they are, many women have simply never had to bother.

"Not since I've been married," said participant Lenore, when asked if she'd ever been in a situation where she needed to maintain her own car; and it was a sentiment echoed by another audience member, Teresa, who added that she wanted to arm herself if she was ever in the situation where she couldn't rely on the RACQ or a mechanically-minded (male) friend.

"A session like this is brilliant. We don't all have a man in our lives, and if I find myself in a situation where I get caught out, and can't call the RACQ, I want to be in control of the vehicle I'm driving."

Although at this stage information sessions such as this are the domain of North Jacklin's Privilege Card members, given the demand for such a service, it's to be hoped that in future they'll be offered to the public as well.

North Jacklin is holding a Beginners' 4-Wheel Drive Day in April for customers – call North Jacklin on 4963 2200 for details; Bob Jane T-Mart is located at the corner of Victoria and Lawson streets, phone 4951 3522.



Ashley Dawes, left, and Julia Orchard, take in the basics of car maintenance – and a drop of champagne to boot – from North Jacklin Nissan motor mechanic Cameron McBride.

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TOP RIGHT: Vicki and Caitlyn Schurmann were VIP guests at North Jacklin Nissan's Women on Wheels evening held last week.

CENTRE RIGHT: Bob Jane T-Mart franchisee Richard Vorst talks tyres with North Jacklin service manager Aimee Mayger (left) and North Jacklin promotions officer Felicity Moselen.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Melissa Eustace and Niki Wheeler partake of champagne, nibbles and car maintenance advice courtesy of North Jacklin Nissan in Gordon Street, Mackay.

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