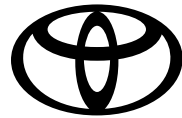


NSW Department for Women



OH WHAT A FEELING!

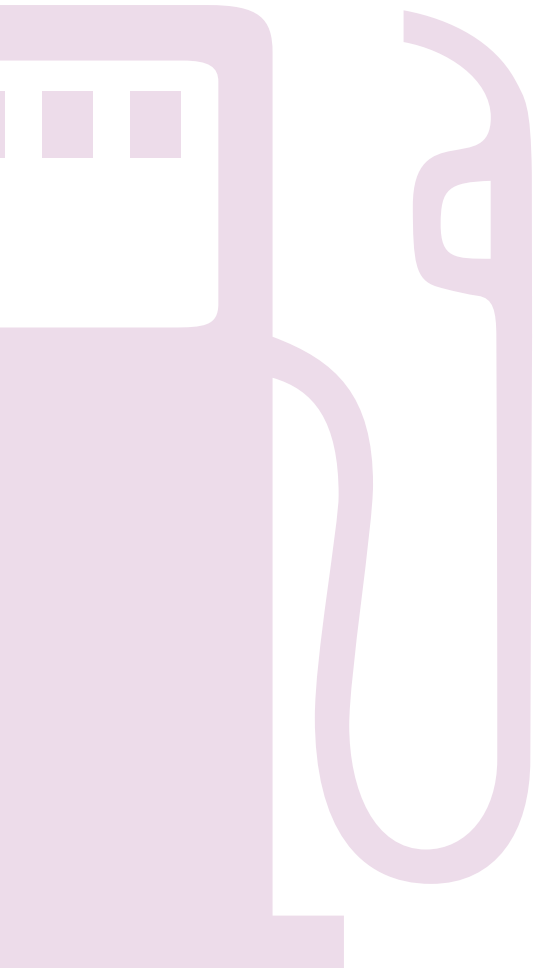
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***Automotive* TOOLKIT**

an information guide for women



The Tool Kit is a NSW Department for Women initiative, produced with help from Toyota Australia and www.toyotaavenue.com.au

The Tool Kit contains handy hints for dealing positively with all aspects of the automotive industry: buying a car or getting repairs or a service. It will tell you what you need to do and where to go to get a great deal, good service and advice.

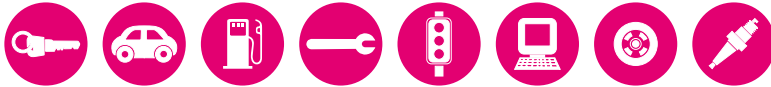
A host of information exists to help you deal confidently with the motor vehicle industry. This kit tells you what this information is and where to get it. It's a valuable resource you won't want to be without.

The Tool Kit is also available on the Department for Women website. Go to www.women.nsw.gov.au

With this Tool Kit tucked inside your handbag or glove box, you can successfully travel the road to genuine customer satisfaction.

Second Edition, March 2002

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Contents

Buying a car – help with research and avoiding pitfalls	3
Rights and remedies – what you need to know and where to get help	6
Repairs and service – technical information and advice	9
Get to know your car – courses available for women motorists	11
Career opportunities in the motor vehicle industry	13

Buying a car



Have you ever been:

- ignored by salesmen and not taken seriously as a potential buyer?
- bullied or pressured into buying a car?
- treated in a patronising way?
- refused the opportunity to negotiate a better price?

Buying a car should be a pleasant experience rather than a daunting one. Being better prepared means avoiding any pitfalls and getting a good deal on the car you really want.

Do your homework first

Before buying a car, do some research on the type of vehicle you want to buy, its cost and where to buy it. This will help you feel more confident negotiating a good price. You will also be able to ask the right questions to ensure you get yourself a great car and a great deal.

Getting in the know

Use the Internet to find information about the right car for you – without the sales pressure and hassle of visiting car yards. On the Internet you can get an indication of what your current car is worth as a trade-in and compare it to the price of a new car. At some websites you can even do a deal online. But take care to ensure the website you are visiting represents a licensed operator or dealer.

First of all, find out how the car buying process works. Know what to do when negotiating with a seller and what you should – or shouldn't – sign.

Most importantly, learn about the basic precautions you should take especially when you are buying from a private seller.

Know how to register a car once you've bought it.

Check the mechanical reliability of the car so you don't buy an unsafe vehicle which could cost you hundreds of dollars to fix.

Find out if the car you want to buy is legally for sale. Stolen cars are sometimes sold to unsuspecting customers.



Automotive websites

www.drive.com.au is an easy to use site which contains a huge range of information on new and used cars, including detailed specifications, colour pictures and comparison shopping.

www.carsales.com.au provides new and used car listings from private sellers and licensed dealers.

www.eauto.com.au provides new and used car listings and research summaries on cars.

www.cartraders.com.au acts as a broker for European vehicles and 4WDs to help customers get the best deal.

www.carpoint.com.au provides 'Buyer Assist', a brokerage service, as well as listings of new and used cars, and has links to motoring magazines and dealers.

www.carsbyweb.com.au is a 'virtual dealership' which acts as a vehicle broker.

www.autobytel.com.au has a huge range of helpful information about buying a car.

You can go straight to car manufacturers' websites to check their range of new vehicles and other services, including www.toyota.com.au. For some really helpful guidance, information and car buying tips specifically for women, just visit www.toyotaavenue.com.au

Handy information

The NSW RTA's 'Buying or selling a vehicle?' brochure explains the different requirements when buying a new or used car and how to register a car once you've bought it. Call for a copy on 13 22 13 or go to their website at www.rta.nsw.gov.au

Manufacturers also produce general guides to the vehicle purchase process. Toyota, for example, has a handy pocket sized booklet called 'The Guide' which is full of tips you can easily refer to throughout the vehicle buying process. For your free copy of Toyota's 'The Guide', call 1800 AVENUE (1800 283683) or print off a copy from www.toyotaavenue.com.au

The NRMA's 'Worry Free Guide to Buying a Car' brochure provides all the information you need to know for a hassle-free car buying experience. Call Automotive Technical Services on 1300 655 443 or go to www.nrma.com.au

You can call the NSW Department of Fair Trading on 13 32 20 to request their brochures on buying a car. Or go to their website at www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au for their 'Car Buyers Checklist'.

The NSW Motor Traders' Association also has helpful tips and advice on buying a new or used car on their website at www.mtansw.com.au (click on 'How to buy a car').



Don't buy a bomb

The NRMA has conducted research and road tests on a huge range of cars. Read the results on their informative website at www.nrma.com.au ('Motor' section).

The Australian Consumers' Association (ACA) has compiled a handy list of car makes and models which have reliability faults or mechanical problems. If you are buying a used car, check their website at www.choice.com.au ('Cars and Motoring' section).

Once you've found the car of your dreams, the NRMA can inspect it to see if it is mechanically sound and safe. Call Vehicle Inspections on 1300 362 802 and they will do an inspection on site. This service costs \$137 for NRMA members, and \$157 for non-members. It is available to you seven days a week.

However, if you don't want to pay for a vehicle inspection but need mechanical information about the car you want to buy, call NRMA Technical Advice on 1300 655 443.

Know your car's financial history

If you don't want your recently purchased second hand car towed away and repossessed, you should always contact REVS (Register of Encumbered Vehicles) at the NSW Department of Fair Trading. REVS will tell you whether a car has any money owing on it or is stolen.

If you're buying through a dealership, you don't have to worry about going through REVS – the dealer is responsible for checking this out. REVS is a free service available seven days a week from 9am – 5pm on (02) 9633 6333 or toll free on 1800 424 988 or through the REVS website www.revs.nsw.gov.au Remember, you won't get your money back if the car was stolen, so it pays to check first.

Now you're ready to go out there and get the best deal you can.

See Chapter 2 on consumer rights when buying a car.



Rights and remedies

Ever wondered what rights you have as a consumer?

When you pay for goods (a car) and services (repairs), the quality and performance of the product must meet a certain standard fit for the purpose for which it is intended. There are laws which protect consumers and places you can go to for advice.

What you should know

Before you sign a contract to buy a car, know your rights and the dealer's obligations. It may save you a lot of stress in the long run if something goes wrong with your vehicle.

The Australian Consumers' Association (ACA) is a non-profit consumer organisation. You can get free assistance and advice from the ACA by calling the Consumer Information Team on (02) 9577 3399 between 8:30am – 5:30pm.

The ACA website has information on action you can take if you have problems with your new car. Go to www.choice.com.au (click on 'Products' then 'Cars and Motoring').

The NSW Department of Fair Trading has a range of helpful brochures and publications which explain your consumer rights. You can request copies or get advice by calling 13 32 20 or go to their website www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au If you need an interpreter, ring the Translation and Interpreter Service on 13 1450 and someone will interpret between you and the Department of Fair Trading.

Information aimed at young people about consumer rights and regulations covering the sale of goods in New South Wales is available at www.moneystuff.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

The NRMA's 'Open Road' magazine has helpful information and advice for its members on motoring consumer needs. To receive a copy ring (02) 9292 9275.



Don't rush to sign a sale contract

Once your signature is on the contract, you have entered into a legally binding agreement. Make sure you carefully read and understand any document you are about to sign. Don't rush into a purchase – it's your decision, so take your time, and get legal advice where appropriate.

The NSW Department of Fair Trading has a publication, 'The Hard Sell' to help you deal with high pressure sales techniques. You can obtain your copy by calling 13 32 20 or visiting the website www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

In NSW, there will soon be a 24-hour cooling-off period for new or used cars bought on credit provided by the dealer or from a credit provider linked to the dealer. The cooling-off period can be waived by the buyer. If the sale is cancelled by the buyer during the cooling-off period, they must pay \$250 or 2% of the purchase price, whichever is the lesser.

The NSW Consumer Credit Legal Centre provides free legal advice on vehicle sales contracts. Call (02) 9212 4111 or toll-free (for remote/regional callers) 1800 247 890.

You can also get legal advice on vehicle sales contracts by calling the NRMA Member Legal Service on (02) 9292 9191.

Are you having problems with the car you've just bought?

If you find faults with your purchase, your first step should be to take the car back to the dealer and discuss the problem with them.

Unlike the situation with other faulty goods, the laws in Australia which cover the sale of motor vehicles mean that even if the car you bought has major faults, it will not be replaced, only repaired.

However, reputable dealers will be happy to help find a solution – their business depends on it. Larger dealerships for the major vehicle manufacturers employ customer relations specialists to help customers with such matters.

Remember, all new cars are covered by warranties – in some cases up to five years or 130,000km – and used cars under 10 years old that have travelled less than 160,000km, purchased from authorised dealers are generally subject to a three month warranty.

This means the dealer must take action to rectify most problems identified during the warranty period, where those problems are covered by the warranty agreement.



Need help?

If you are having difficulties with service or repairs, the first thing to do is get advice.

You can contact the NSW Department of Fair Trading on 13 32 20 to get advice on the best way to settle your dispute through the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (previously Fair Trading Tribunal).

The NSW Motor Traders' Association (MTA) has helpful information on what to do if you are having a dispute with a dealer or repairer. Information on their website includes who to contact, what steps to take to lodge a complaint, how much it will cost to lodge the complaint and rights of appeal. Go to www.mtansw.com.au (click on 'Consumer Problems').

The Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council (MVRIC) provides a free advisory service on car repairs. You can speak to a Technical Enquiry Officer if you think you were overcharged or received unsatisfactory customer service. Call (02) 9712 2144 or email mvrict@mvrict.nsw.gov.au

The NRMA also provides assistance in settling disputes between customers and its Approved Repairers by negotiating with each party. Call 1300 655 443.

Need to take action?

If you're not satisfied, you should consider making a formal complaint.

You can contact the head of the dealership or manufacturer directly either by telephone or letter if you are dissatisfied with the car or the service you received from the dealer who sold you the car.

If your complaint relates to a repair not performed under a warranty, contact MVRIC on (02) 9712 2144 who will attempt to resolve the matter.

The next step is the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal where disputes involving dealers, manufacturers and repairers are resolved legally. If you wish to lodge a complaint, contact the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal directly on (02) 9895 2070.

There are two websites which provide helpful information about the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal and the complaint process. Simply go to www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au and www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au (click on 'NSW Court and Tribunal Websites').

Remember: there are steps you can take to try to solve problems with car purchases and repairers. Making a few phone calls may save you money and heartache in the long run.

Repairs and service



Women complain that some repairers:

- use overly technical terms and automotive jargon
- refuse to answer their questions
- ignore them when they are accompanied by men
- overcharge, or charge for repairs that weren't done properly.

Taking your car to be repaired can be a lot less intimidating with a bit of knowledge. You will be more confident dealing with a repairer when you know what questions to ask about your car, where to get advice about the repairs done, and what to do if you are unhappy with the work and service you received.

Understanding car repairs

The Motor Vehicle Repair Industry Council (MVRIC) has an excellent guide on car repairs and mechanics. For a free copy of the brochure 'Your Glovebox Companion to Trouble Free Car Repairs' call MVRIC on (02) 9712 2200.

The MVRIC website also has excellent information with step-by-step guides to getting a vehicle repaired and what to do after repairs have been done. Go to www.mvric.nsw.gov.au

The NRMA website has technical advice and maintenance tips on a range of cars. Go to www.nrma.com.au (click on 'Motor').

For helpful information and 'smart tips' on vehicle repairs and common car maintenance questions go to www.drive.com.au

This information will help you get a better grasp on what your mechanic is talking about when explaining what needs to be done and how much it will cost.

Learn about your car

An excellent way to be more confident when dealing with a repairer is to do a basic car maintenance course. You will learn technical terms and what is actually going on under the bonnet. Information on courses is included in Chapter 4.



Get a written quote

When you take your car in for repairs, always ask for a written quote for the repair work. If you don't understand items on the quote, ask for them to be explained to you. While repairers are not required by law to provide their customers with a written quote, within the industry it is seen as good practice.

What repairs were done to your car?

If you want an objective opinion about the type and cost of repairs done to your car, ring the MVRIC's free advisory service. A Technical Enquiry Officer may be able to tell you whether or not you were overcharged for the repairs and will also record any complaint you may have about the service you received. Call (02) 9712 2144 or email mvrhc@mvrhc.nsw.gov.au

The NRMA also provides advice about car repairs and mechanical problems. Call NRMA Technical Advice on 1300 655 443 or write to NRMA Technical Advice, 388 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

You can also log on to the NRMA website at www.nrma.com.au to send your question via email.

Need help solving a dispute?

If your problem relates to a new vehicle, talk to the manufacturer directly. Many have customer relations hotlines and departments dedicated to solving your problem.

If you are unhappy with your repairs but don't know what you can do about it, go to the Motor Traders' Association (MTA) website for helpful information on consumer disputes with repairers at www.mtansw.com.au (click on 'Consumer Problems').

The MVRIC website also has helpful tips on how to handle a dispute and how to make a complaint. Simply go to www.mvrhc.nsw.gov.au (click on 'Dispute Resolution').

If you need a mediator to try to solve the dispute between yourself and a repairer, contact MVRIC on (02) 9712 2144 for assistance.

Remember: you're paying for the repairs. You have every right to ask questions and get clear answers before you agree to the work.

Get to know **your car**



An easy way to feel more confident when looking to buy a car or getting your car serviced or repaired is to know something about cars – how they run and what the technical terms mean. With this knowledge, you will be less likely to be persuaded to buy the most expensive car or part, or feel you can't question what the dealer or mechanic is telling you.

Get your hands dirty

There are a number of practical, 'hands-on' workshops to help you get to know your car. A number of workshops have been designed specifically for women, to give them a better understanding of how cars operate and the necessary knowledge to deal more confidently with car dealers and mechanics.

For example, Toyota Australia offers free Vehicle Awareness Workshops designed to make you more comfortable with your car and your driving. These cover a wide range of issues from changing a tyre to personal safety. Ring your local Toyota dealership to find out when a workshop is being held near you or go to www.toyotaavenue.com.au

The NRMA runs a basic Car Care Course to help people gain a better understanding of how their car works and how to perform simple maintenance tasks. This six week course is held two hours per week and costs \$82 (including GST). For information or to request a brochure, call 1300 655 443.

Beaurepaires offer 'Women on the Move', a free 'hands on' basic car maintenance workshop, in city, rural and regional areas. To find out if a workshop is being held in your area, or to book your own group workshop, ring 1800 999 684. You can also check their website at www.beaurepaires.com.au (click on 'Special Interest Groups' then 'Women on the Move').

Bob Jane T-Marts has 'Motoring Women', a free workshop about basic car repairs and maintenance. For more information ring the state office on (02) 9799 9766 or check their website at www.bobjane.com.au (click on 'Learn all about us' then 'Motoring Women').



Read up and learn

The Liverpool Women's Resource Centre (LWRC) in NSW has put together a handy guide for women called 'Tania the Toolwoman'. It contains straightforward explanations of the mechanics of a car with simple diagrams of engines and vehicle parts. This will definitely help you understand cars and technical terms.

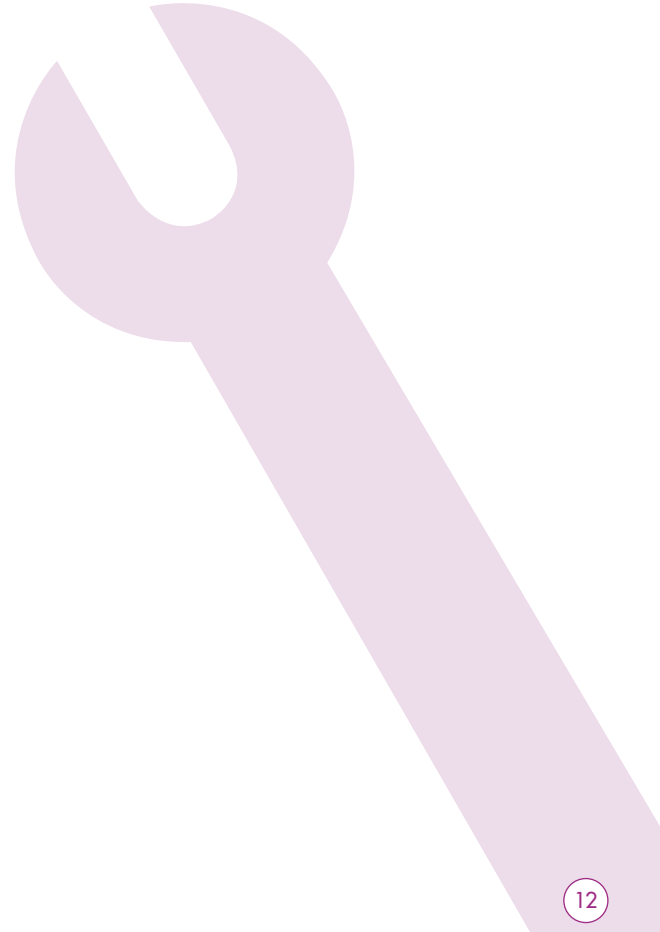
To receive a copy of 'Tania' and for more information ring (02) 9607 7536. You can also download and print off parts one and two of 'Tania the Toolwoman' from the LWRC website at www.isis.aust.com/lwrc

If you learn more through visual instruction, Toyota has available a limited number of Car Care Clinic videos for \$5.00 (including GST). Call 1800 AVENUE (1800 283683) for your copy.

Or you can call the NRMA to order a copy of their 'Car Care at Home' video on 1300 655 443. The video costs \$25 (including GST and postage & handling).

Don't be afraid to ask questions

Once you've learnt more about your car, don't be shy – ask questions. If you still don't understand what your dealer or mechanic is telling you, ask them to explain in non-technical terms. After all, it's part of their job to provide good customer service.



Career opportunities in the motor vehicle industry



With women representing almost 50 percent of motorists in NSW, it seems logical that women should be working in dealerships and service centres.

Many agree more women in the industry is a good thing. And if you are considering a career working with cars, but are turned off by the perceived 'blokey' environment, think again. The industry is changing and there are more opportunities than you could imagine. It's not so much about grease and oil and getting dirty, it's more about exciting new technology, big modern service centres and delivering excellent customer service.

Whether you're already working in the industry and want to shift your career up another gear, or are keen to move into the industry, it is important to develop strong networks and to undertake training to support your skills.

Supporting women in the industry

An Automotive Women's Network has been set up by the Motor Traders' Association (MTA). The network aims to foster career paths for NSW women in the industry through training, mentoring and getting more women into senior positions. It is an excellent way to share experiences and support each other.

If you are working in the motor vehicle industry and would like to join or know more about the Women's Network, phone (02) 9213 4208.

Toyota is one automotive company which hires women at all levels and provides specific training in the industry. For more information phone (02) 9710 3333.

Getting ahead

A Certificate III training course in Small Automotive Business Administration allows women working in the industry to gain formal qualifications for their job skills. The Certificate III is available as a distance education course through TAFE colleges in NSW. For course information contact the Automotive Training Board (ATB) on (02) 9796 3655 or visit their website at www.atbnsw.com.au

You can also contact TAFE directly on 1300 360 354 or go to the website www.def.nsw.edu.au

More women working in the motor vehicle industry is good for women consumers and good for the industry.



How to get your copy of the Tool Kit

To request copies of the Tool Kit you can call the Women's Information and Referral Service tollfree number 1800 817 227.

Write to us at:

Level 4
Stockland House
181 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Tool Kit is also available on the Internet at:

www.women.nsw.gov.au or visit www.toyotaavenue.com.au

For further information on a wide range of topics for women, go to the NSW Women's Gateway at www.womens.gateway.nsw.gov.au

DISCLAIMER: This Tool Kit lists various third party service providers ("Third Parties") who will be able to assist you in your dealings with the automotive industry. The contact details of the Third Parties, and in some cases links to web sites operated by the Third Parties, are provided for your convenience only. The NSW Department for Women and Toyota Australia make no representations or warranties regarding the information provided to you by the Third Parties, or the information contained on the web sites of the Third Parties. Any reliance you place on information or advice provided to you by the Third Parties is at your own risk. The NSW Department for Women and Toyota Australia accept no liability for any damage, loss, liability, cost or expense which you may suffer as a direct or indirect result of your reliance on such information or advice.

