

NA (and NB) wet carpets ...

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Having recently bought my #3 MX-5, a '91 Eunos (to use for Khanacrosses etc with my granddaughter), I have been gradually working my way through many small issues.

The first was to swap out the Koni suspension, extractors and exhaust from my '89 Australian-delivered car and fit them to the Eunos, plus many other general bits of maintenance.

I'm about to change out cam belt, water pump, hoses and belts.

The car has been stored out of use but under cover for the last seven or eight years. While parked in the backyard, during fitting the standard bits back on to the '89 car, we had some VERY heavy rain – a couple of times!

Lo and behold, *Eunice the Eunos* was rather damp inside! The first and obvious thing to do was to check the drains behind the seats. Once this was done, a second issue showed up: a leaking roof.

Then the "dry out"! So, if you have an NA or an NB, here's some info that may be useful to you.

1. Blocked rear drains

This has been covered in *mxtra* previously, but it's useful to repeat.

Behind each seat, tucked in behind the seat belt tower (and almost impossible to see!) is a drain hole. This drain is about 20mm in diameter and takes the water from the rain rail down to drain under the car.



The drain hole behind the seat belt tower



The blue tape in the photo above shows the approximate position of the drain channel. Note the puddle underneath!

The drain tube blocks up over time if not kept clear. Mine was VERY blocked on both sides of the car and took some careful fettling to clear – after draining them, I ended up with two big mud patches on the garage floor!

Be careful when clearing these drains as there is a rubber "door hickey" on the bottom which can be pushed off if forced too hard from above. It's a bugger to get back on – ask me how I know.

To clear the drain, I used a length of hard plastic water hose about 10mm in diameter (the stuff used to hook up fridges and under-bench water filters). *Other products can be used; this is just what I happened to have.* I had to "work" the tubes both from above AND underneath (with a small screwdriver) to dislodge the plug of set mud.

Before you start, have a look under the car to familiarise yourself with where the drain outlets are – if you can't SAFELY jack it up (including a stand), use a mirror or your phone set on front screen/selfie mode. Once you know where you are working at each end, GENTLY probe back and forth from each end (if blocked) to dislodge the crap. If necessary, run a SMALL amount of water down to flush out.

What is the purpose of these drains? The soft-top roof, where it meets the bodywork, does not just drain on to the body; there is actually a plastic "rain rail" as part of the roof's mounting to the body. The rain comes off the roof and into this rain rail, which then takes the water around to the two drain points/tubes discussed above. As such, it's super critical that the drains are free or the car rapidly fills with water. In my case there was so much, it went all the way to the front footwells!



Rain rail and drain



Another view to help locate the drain tube

2. Leaking roof

The roof on *Eunice*, while generally good, had two small areas – at joints of vinyl just above the window – where small amounts of water were leaking inside.

This was easily fixed (while not super pretty) using a product I bought from Clark Rubber about six years ago, called *Stormsure* flexible repair adhesive. I had been told to prolong the shelf life by storing in the freezer (my wife was thrilled about this!).



It worked! The product was still good.

I worked it into the leak points using a small amount and an icy pole stick, letting it set up a bit before adding a second layer. I used masking tape below it as it tended to “run” or sag a bit. So far it seems to have worked and from past experience using it on small tears in a roof, will stay flexible. **Note** that it *CAN* be used for small tears so it’s a great product for a soft top needing repair.



Roof repairs 1 (above) and 2

3. Drying out the carpets

The car STANK! It also fogged up really easily, indicating the presence of a lot of moisture in the cabin. While it would have been good to fully remove the carpets, I did not see the need and instead followed these steps:

- » Remove the carpet from rear parcel shelf and rear “firewall”. This requires the *careful* removal of plastic push-in clips ... you need to get under the head and *gently* ease it out. I used a cheap trim removal tool (*Supercheap Auto*) and only broke one clip. *Supercheap* also sells replacement clips if you need them.



Trim removal tool

- » Once out, these carpets (and underfelt) can be hung up to air dry (the wheelie bins proved useful).
- » Then remove the seats – four bolts with 14mm heads. *Before doing so*, make sure you check if there is wiring for headrest speakers under the front of the seats (there will be if your car is a *Eunos*, but some *Australian NAs* have fitted *after-market*). This is a simple unclip.



Check under the seats for any headrest speaker wiring

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Seat bolt



Seat belt bolt

- » Once the seats are out, the seat belts need to be unbolted *at the bottom only* so the carpet can be released. You'll need a 16mm ring spanner or socket.
- » Now remove the door sill covers and carefully ease carpets back towards the tunnel and see how wet it is. Mine was very wet, both sides.



Door sill removal

- » Prop the carpet up with something and ensure all wet carpet is elevated and open to the air. Also mop up any water in hollows inside the car (*yep, mine was that wet in places!*).
- » In my case, I used a fan heater to blast the underside of the carpet to dry it out. This needs some care as the carpet has the potential to fall on top of the heater and overheat it ... so *keep an eye out - regularly!* I needed about five to six hours each side to dry the carpet, initially on *high* and then for a while on *low* just to blow all the moisture out of the carpet and car.



Fan heater, drying the front floor



Front floor

So far, the fix-up seems to have worked well.

Once you're satisfied all is dried out, reassemble it all and make a mental note to keep the drain tubes clean more often!

Note that the NC has a similar drain setup but seems less prone to blocking. ■