



Wadley's Panel Beaters

A strong, independent woman running a leading business in WA

JULIE WADLEY, OWNER OF WADLEY'S PANEL BEATERS IN ROCKINGHAM WA AND CAPRICORN DIRECTOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA, SPEAKS OF HER PASSION FOR THE INDUSTRY SHE HAS SUPPORTED IN NUMEROUS WAYS SINCE 1972.

Julie and her then-husband George, a panel beater by trade, started the business in the early 70s as George had always wanted to work for himself. Similarly, Julie had always worked in an office in accounting and customer service roles and so it was a natural transition to start their own business.

Although the business started in a rather modest shed, Wadley's Panel Beaters have now been on the current site for the past 40 years, and whilst the building is showing its age, they stuck to a strict maintenance regime over the years. Sadly, George succumbed to cancer 14 years ago after a 5-year illness and so Julie "stepped up the plate" and has run the business ever since.

Something that women tend to

excel at is multi-tasking and Julie is no exception. Not only does she work in the business, she makes the time to work on the business and has even diversified to include written-off vehicle inspection for the WA Department of Transport. However, she has not lost sight of the fundamentals of continual improvement and customer satisfaction. "I employ great specialist staff in the business, and whilst it's a challenge to keep up with the latest repair methods and technology, we're all committed to adapt and change our approach to repair the cars of the future."

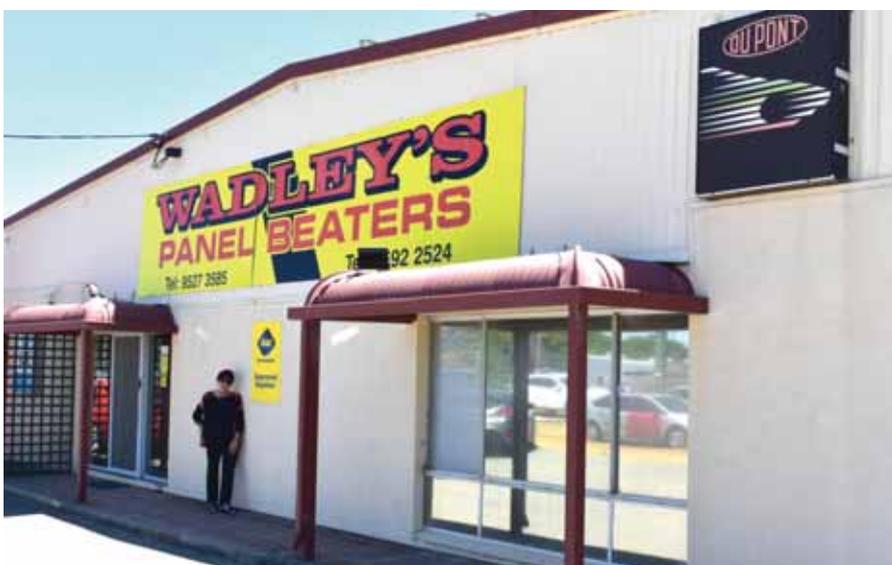
Julie has seen the role of women in the collision repair industry evolve in recent years, particularly with the growth in the number of female

apprentices coming into the trade and, more importantly, completing their qualification. Julie sees that the young women are especially skilled in colour matching and spray painting. "Women are recognised for their valuable input from a female perspective. They say that behind every good man is a woman, and this is particularly observable in our industry. It really is a team effort a Wadley's."

Wadley's, not unlike other repairers, went through the transition when major insurers changed their model to, she believes, the detriment of the industry, and she reached the point where she sought other sources of work. She now operates very closely with her key work providers, RAC, QBE and Comminsure and believes the relationships she has built over decades is fundamental to her success.

The role of women in the collision repair industry is rapidly developing and we now see many women running their own businesses and driving innovation and change. After 47 years, Julie Wadley continues to inspire women irrespective of their role in the industry and in her own business. "We have a culture of mutual respect and we expect nothing less, whether it's in the office or on the shop floor."

She has some sage advice for any young woman considering a career in the industry. "If you are keen to work in the industry, pursue the dream. Always try to start with work experience or



pre-apprenticeship in the trade of your choice. We have female engineers, mechanics and spray painters. It would also be good to see female panel beaters. With all the modern equipment, it's not an issue of physical strength as it was in the past."

Julie cites the rapidly-changing technology as one of the greatest challenges facing the industry today. "Businesses need to keep on top with all the latest methods of repair and continual upgrading of equipment for all the different types of steel being used in today's vehicles. Continual training is an essential part of any business, and we are no exception. Although some time away, driverless cars will be a real challenge."

Wadley's has surrounded itself with some of the best in the business: suppliers such as Car-O-Liner, 3M and Axalta with their Standoblue range and IQ1 body shop management system. Julie was particularly complimentary of Robin Taylor and his support with the Axalta Services program.

In 1994 Julie became a Capricorn member and, as a direct result, the business thrived, with consolidation of her accounts, growth in member rewards and by taking advantage of the wide range of Capricorn programs. With the intent of "giving something back", in 2014 Julie became Capricorn's first-ever female director and brought her passion for the automotive industry to the role. She



The Refinish Team.



Scott Weller.



Julie Wadley.

serves on the Remuneration and Nomination Committee and the Capricorn Relationship Committee and has previously been a member of the Capricorn Audit and Risk Committee.

Julie served on the MTAWA Board of Management from 2000 to 2013, including as Vice Chairperson, and was a member of the MTAWA Body Repair Committee from 1995 to 2013, including twice as Chairperson over those years. Julie was honoured with Life Membership of MTAWA, in recognition

of her contribution to the industry.

Wadley's motto is "Honesty, Integrity and Old-Fashioned Service". However, there is nothing old-fashioned about Julie Wadley. She built a business based upon exceptional service and customer satisfaction, by listening to her customers and understanding what they are going through. She is showing no signs of slowing down and is truly an icon in the collision repair industry in Western Australia.

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