

Water leak in your NA?

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If you own an NA MX-5, this is worth a read.

I have had all sorts of cooling problems with my car culminating in putting in a new water pump, brand new aluminium radiator off *ebay* (could not believe how cheap it was or the quality of it!) and a full set (I thought!) of hose replacements (also off *ebay*).

After struggling with some of the hoses and having to drill and tap a new fitting into the front of the motor, I thought all my problems were over. *Wrong!*

Every time I drove the car there was the unmistakable smell of coolant **but** no discernable loss of water, no pools of water under the car, no sign of leakage ... nothing.

I had convinced myself that I must have put a minor crack in the heater when struggling to get hoses on/off the heater connections and was "looking forward" to pulling the damn thing out to repair it.

A few weeks back at the start of an MX-5 Club run in Traralgon, just as we all lined up to take off, there was suddenly a cloud of steam coming from under the bonnet – whatever it was finally let go at the worst possible time!

It turns out there is a rubber blanking plug at the rear of the head, under the cam angle sensor (CAS) which

I was totally unaware of. This was the culprit!

The part cost \$8 and a new O-ring for the CAS was \$12 (both held in stock by *MX-5 Mania* in Sydney, www.mx5mania.com.au)

The removal and fitting were something else! I searched a few US sites and found them saying the job was hard. But they don't have steering, a brake booster and brake lines and clutch cable in their way – we do! The main photo below, "borrowed" from *miataturbo.net*, shows the detail at the rear of the head.

The only way I could find to do the job was to remove the CAS (after marking its position for re-fitting), getting the CAS out of the way (which involved removal of rear engine lift point and then a lot of cursing!), then using my left hand and a small pair of needle nosed pliers from the side, and right hand from the top, easing the hose off the fitting.

Putting the new hose on to the fitting on the head was straightforward and I used a long socket over it to get a bit more purchase to push it on.

I then struggled for about an hour to **try** to get the Mazda spring hose clip back on, using the needle-nosed pliers. The clip gradually pushed more and more out of shape and it became impossible!

I ended up fitting a good quality stainless steel jubilee clip with hex head drive and a ¼" drive socket, with universal joint and long extension, from the top, to do it up.

Not the most pleasant job I have ever undertaken, but one I wish I'd known about earlier! I missed a good MX-5 Club run and had to trailer the car home! ●

