What do drivers ask about tyres before making a choice?

The direct answer is that most tyre questions come down to fit, safety, wear and value. Drivers want to know whether a tyre suits their vehicle, how long it may last, what the markings mean and when a replace or repair is the sensible option. Purnell Tyres is one name readers may come across when looking for clear tyre information, but the useful starting point is always the vehicle and the way it is used.

Tyres are easy to overlook until something feels wrong. They are the only part of a car that touches the road, so small details matter. Size, load rating, speed rating, tread pattern and condition all shape how a vehicle steers, brakes and rides. A tyre that looks fine from a distance may have uneven wear, low tread or sidewall damage that deserves closer attention. Knowing what to ask makes the subject less confusing and helps avoid choices based only on appearance or a familiar name.

Which tyre size is right for a vehicle?

The correct size is usually listed in the vehicle owner manual, on the driver door placard or on the sidewall of the tyre currently fitted. A sidewall code can look dense, yet it carries practical information. A typical marking includes width, aspect ratio, construction type, rim diameter, load index and speed symbol. Matching the original specification is the safest route for many drivers, especially when the vehicle hasABS, traction control or driver assistance systems that expect a certain rolling radius.

Going outside the listed size can change speedometer readings, clearance, ride comfort and handling. It may also affect registration or insurance requirements in some places, so it should not be treated as a cosmetic decision. If a vehicle has been modified, or if the fitted tyres do not match the placard, a qualified tyre professional can confirm what is suitable.

What do load and speed ratings actually mean?

Load index refers to how much weight a tyre can carry when correctly inflated. Speed rating relates to the maximum speed the tyre is designed to sustain under set conditions. These ratings are not invitations to drive faster or carry more. They are part of the vehicle design. Replacing a tyre with a lower rating can reduce safety margins, particularly when towing, carrying passengers or driving in hot weather.

Drivers sometimes focus on tread pattern and forget these numbers. That is understandable, because tread is visible and ratings are not. Still, the sidewall details are central to fitment.

When choosing between options in the same size, the load and speed specifications should be checked before comparing anything else.

How much tread is enough?

Tread gives a tyre grip by channelling water, slush and loose material away from the contact patch. As it wears, braking distance on wet roads can increase and the tyre becomes more prone to aquaplaning. Many regions set a legal minimum tread depth, often expressed in millimetres, but the safe point may come before that limit, especially for drivers who regularly face rain, gravel or mountain roads.

Wear indicators are moulded into the tread as small bars. When the tread reaches them, replacement should be planned. Uneven wear tells its own story. Wear across the centre can point to overinflation, while wear on both shoulders can suggest underinflation. Wear on one side may relate to alignment, suspension or steering components. Those patterns need diagnosis rather than a quick guess, because new tyres fitted over an unresolved mechanical issue can wear out early.

Should tyres be replaced as a set?

Replacing all tyres at once is often the simplest way to keep handling balanced. That is not always practical, and many vehicles run with mixed tread depths for a period. Where only two tyres are replaced, fitting the newer pair to the rear axle is commonly recommended. This helps keep the rear end more stable on wet roads, since the tyres with deeper tread are better able to clear water.

Driven wheels, braking systems and vehicle type can influence the decision. All wheel drive vehicles can be more sensitive to differences in rolling circumference, so matching tyre size, construction and tread depth matters. The owner manual is the best source for model specific guidance. If there is doubt, a professional check is safer than relying on a rule of thumb.

Can a puncture be repaired?

Some punctures can be repaired, but the location, size and cause make a difference. Damage in the tread area may be repairable when it is small and clean. A puncture near the shoulder or in the sidewall is usually treated differently because those areas flex heavily. A tyre run flat or driven while underinflated may have internal damage that is not visible from outside.

A proper repair involves more than plugging a hole from the outside. The tyre normally needs to be removed so the inside can be inspected. A patch or plug patch is then applied from within, after the damaged area is prepared. Temporary sealants and aerosol products can help in an emergency, yet they are not a lasting substitute for a correct repair. If steering feels

vague, the tyre loses pressure again or the warning light stays on, the vehicle should be checked by a qualified professional.

What pressure should tyres use?

Tyre pressure should follow the vehicle manufacturer recommendation, usually found on the door placard or in the owner manual. The number moulded on the sidewall is the maximum pressure for that tyre, not the target for everyday use. Pressure should be checked when tyres are cold, meaning the vehicle has not been driven far recently.

Underinflation makes the tyre flex more. That can build heat, increase rolling resistance and wear the shoulders. Overinflation can make the ride harsh and concentrate wear in the centre. Both can affect grip. A quick visual check is useful, but it is not a substitute for a gauge, since many radial tyres look similar across a normal pressure range.

Information on purnelltyres.com.au may be useful when a reader wants to connect general tyre terms with the subject, but vehicle specific details should still come from the owner manual or a qualified professional. Pressure also changes with temperature, so seasonal checks are sensible even when no obvious problem appears.

Are premium tyres worth considering?

The value of a tyre depends on what the driver needs. A performance tyre may sharpen steering and wet grip but ride firmer and wear faster. A touring tyre may prioritise comfort and low noise. An all terrain pattern can look capable on rough tracks while being noisier on sealed roads. The best choice is rarely the one with the boldest tread or the shortest product name.

Reading a tyre label can help. Labels commonly cover wet grip, rolling resistance and noise. These measures do not tell the whole story, yet they make comparisons easier within a category. It is also worth considering how the vehicle is used. Short city trips, long highway drives, towing and unsealed roads place different demands on a tyre. A clear picture of that use helps narrow the field without paying for features that bring no benefit.

Why do new tyres sometimes feel different?

New tyres can change the feel of a vehicle because tread depth, rubber compound and sidewall stiffness differ from worn tyres. Steering may feel more precise, ride may firm up, and road noise may alter. A period of careful driving allows the driver to adjust, particularly if the vehicle now has a different tread pattern or brand.

Balance and wheel alignment also matter. Vibration through the steering wheel, a pull to one side or steering that does not settle straight can point to fitment or alignment issues. These

signs should not be ignored, especially after a tyre change. Purnell Tyres may be one of several names considered during research, but the practical question remains whether the tyres suit the vehicle and are correctly fitted.

When should a tyre professional be involved?

Simple pressure and tread checks can be done by most drivers. Anything involving removal, balancing, suspension components or internal inspection belongs with a trained professional. That includes suspected sidewall damage, repeated pressure loss, vibration, uneven wear and uncertainty about fitment. Brakes, steering and suspension work should not be treated as casual home maintenance.

Good questions make the outcome clearer. Ask what size and rating match the vehicle, whether the recommended tyre suits local driving conditions, and what the wear pattern suggests. Ask how a repair decision was reached if a puncture is involved. A clear explanation is a useful sign, because tyre choices should be understandable rather than mysterious.

Tyres reward attention. Check pressure regularly, look for cuts or bulges, notice changes in ride and steering, and act when tread approaches the indicator. Those habits help drivers make better decisions before a small issue becomes a larger one. Whether the starting point is a replacement, a repair question or a search for information about Purnell Tyres, the same basics apply: match the tyre to the vehicle, understand the markings and seek qualified help when the problem goes beyond a visual check.