

A poster girl for tradies

By **Roderick Shaw**

CHANTEL JAMES got into television from underneath a car.

The 22-year-old mechanic from Londonderry, who works at Penrith's Production Automotive, said she did not expect her love of cars to earn her five minutes of fame.

"One of my TAFE teachers told me a few weeks ago that I was doing this ad for TAFE," Miss James said.

"It wasn't just me; there's a chef and a fitter in the ad too."

In the clip, Miss James slides out from under a car and says: "That's my WSI" and hands over a kit symbolising the Western Sydney Institute to the other trades students.

She had another stint on television earlier this year in a story on female "tradies" by the Channel Nine show *A Current Affair*.

"It was about women being out and about in male-dominated industries," she said.

She said she was chosen for these roles because she was "a girlie female".

"I'm very happy being a girlie too," Miss James said. "I have my girlie time, which is sport — I'm a kick-boxer — and hanging out with friends."



See you on TV: Chantel James said working on cars got her into the unlikely world of television.

Picture: Gary Warrick

She said she had been interested in cars since she was "a little girlie" and wondered how to make them better and travel faster.

However, there were no car mechanics in her family and she was the first to go into the industry.

"My dad then became an auto mechanic two years after me, and my little brother followed," Miss James said.

She said the fun of mechanics lay in treating cars like sick patients.