

Getting to Zero ... comfortably with a Tesla 3.

Sue Lees, Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra



The Tesla 3

I am not a 'tech-head'. When I yell for help from my family because there is a problem with my computer the reply invariably is 'It's not the computer that's the problem!' But even I am 'tech-savvy' enough to drive a Tesla, which is a computer on wheels really.

There is a learning curve as a Tesla

owner. You need to learn

- **Regenerative braking.** The car slows down when you take your foot off the accelerator so that actual braking is reserved for moments when you need to act quickly.
- **Charging.** The Tesla 3 has a 420km range. For city driving, we would usually charge overnight (2 x per week) on our normal electricity system. For longer drives, we stop at **Superchargers** or other rapid chargers. The Tesla navigation system shows you chargers on your route. Charging takes 30 min – 60 minutes for a full charge. A full charge would cost us about \$24. Often we are doing just a ½ charge.
- **Computer screen** holds all the car information and options to use.
- **Reverse use of indicators and driving modes.** Australian drivers are often used to indicators on the right and driving modes somewhere to your left. It's a bit of a challenge for the brain!
- **Be aware of people around you.** They may not hear you but the Tesla is always showing you information of what is around you outside of the car.

- **Your phone is your key.** The Tesla Ap on your phone controls the car. These days we all carry our phone with us. You can charge your phone in the car while you drive. There are a couple of emergency key cards to use if necessary.

Advantages

- **Smooth to drive and handles beautifully.** We tested the handling by driving to Falls Creek from Melbourne. We charged fully at Euroa supercharger and 10 min top up at Ovens Valley. The Tesla handled beautifully on winding mountain roads. Ours is not a 'snowmobile' but you can get that option. (There is also a charger at Falls Creek)
- **Little maintenance.** Truly! Every couple of years we will need to take it in to Tesla to do small items like change windscreen wipers. There is no engine that needs regular maintenance.
- **Dog mode.** You can leave your dog in the car – put on 'dog



A dog's life in the Tesla - with 'dog mode'

mode' which maintains a temperature of 21 in the car and the computer screen tells your pet that 'my owner will be back soon', with temperature displayed - which means that you, the dog and people looking into the car don't worry.

- **Phone control** means that you can put on the air-conditioning before you enter the car on a hot day.
- **Safety.** The AI in Tesla means that there are a lot of safety features in the car. You can control the distance between

cars, keep steady in a lane, the car will automatically react in dangerous situations. You must have your hands on the steering wheel at all times. The car will sense if you are not doing this. In Australia, you can't drive hands free anyway.

- **Automatic upgrades.** Instead of servicing the car will tell you when it wants to upgrade to improve features etc. You can schedule the upgrades. We do that overnight as the car needs to be stationary.
- **Automatic settings per driver.** This is a great advantage, and even better when you have more than one driver for the car. You can have a number of drivers. You can set steering wheel height, seat position, side mirror positions per driver + notifications such as speed signs.
- **The 'feel good' environment factor.** We are generating fewer greenhouse gases. Unfortunately, Victoria's electricity is still fairly 'dirty'. We have solar panels, but they feedback into the grid. We charge overnight when electricity is cheaper.
- **Running costs** are by far cheaper with the Tesla than a petrol car.

Challenges

- **Range anxiety.** Much talked about but we have not had any issues finding chargers for longer trips.
Melbourne to Port Fairy (280 km) – we charged at Colac.
Melbourne to Albury (326 km) – we charged at Euroa and Wodonga
Melbourne to Yarram (222 km) – we charged at Moe
Melbourne to Falls Creek (385 km) – we charged at Euroa, Myrtleford, Falls Creek
Charging at home is done from an ordinary power point. There are chargers around us at Woolworths and the local library. Chargers are often near shops so you go and have a coffee while charging. Charging forces you to have a reasonable break.
- **New learning curve.** Holds dementia at bay!

- **Price.** The Tesla 3 was \$60,000 which included a \$3000 Victorian government rebate. This is the most we have ever paid for a car but the car and battery will probably outlast us (we are in our 60s). They are constantly becoming cheaper. We were prepared to pay \$60,000 to help drive the price down further so more can be produced. Also, at \$60,000 it made financial sense in terms of car safety as we get older, little maintenance, low running costs, high reliability.

The future

Is definitely electric vehicles. Electric trucks are being developed, and electric tradie's utes. Electric buses and trains are already here. Drivers fear distance in Australia, but our experience is that chargers are being rolled out by Tesla and governments.

Australia does not need to become a junkyard for petrol cars that are being rejected by much of the world. Choosing to buy electric, drives the need for chargers to be built.

We are walkers and campers who like to go outback and remote, so it will be a while before we can live without our petrol Subaru, but for city and main roads driving the Tesla is spectacular in terms of performance, ease of driving and overall comfort (for us and the dogs!)

For more information visit:

Carsales.com review January 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A76xecli4eE>

Tesla 3

https://www.tesla.com/en_au/model3