

MERCEDES-BENZ'S EQC400

The purchase of this vehicle was effectively a toe in the “green” environmental pond. After having installed solar panels and a battery at home, the decision to purchase an EV was the final link in my journey to the “green” pond.

I acquired the EQC in February 2021 and so far have driven it just under 5000 kilometres.



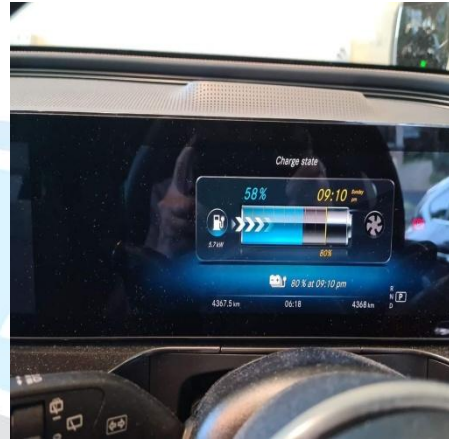
After a diet of V8 cars and twin turbo AMG vehicles, the move to an EV has been “electric” in terms of performance shock value.

The EV can accelerate more rapidly than my last AMG Mercedes which was a C43 model with twin turbo V6, (which car was no slouch). In a straight line the EV will win every time against just about anything save and except some exotic supercars. The car is environmentally friendly, having been manufactured in part with recycled materials, especially the dash top which, I understand, is made from recycled ocean plastic waste.



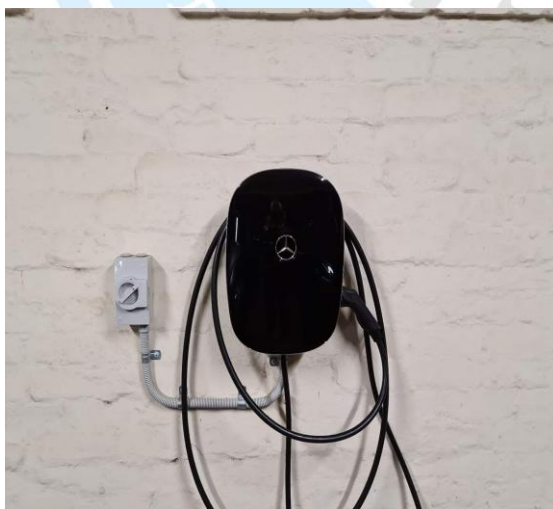
The car’s interior is an exercise in adventurous design and offers a large flat screen but, unlike the Tesla, this screen is horizontal rather than vertical and lays out its information in

my line of sight. The panels show driving information such as speed and charge and on the left hand side, all media and navigation applications. An extra flourish is that there are 64 different ambient light colours from which you can do your interior decorator thing and there are a number of “themes” like Ocean Blue, Red Moon, Fire Red, Dawn Blue and Sun Yellow to name a few.



Given the car's electric propulsion, there is no noise other than the muted sound of run flat tyres doing their job. Sometimes, I miss the “growl” of my earlier cars, but I forget about that the instance I give the accelerator a prod and leave so-called performance vehicles behind.

People are concerned about range (range anxiety) and the ability to top up the battery when on a longer trip. In my car's case, it has an 80 kilowatt hour battery that I can charge up from my 7 kilowatt hour wall box at home (this was part of the deal buying the car from Mercedes Benz direct). This wall box can in fact take power from the battery installation which, in turn, is topped up with solar power from the panels on the roof of my home. The end result is that I can effectively run the car for nothing.

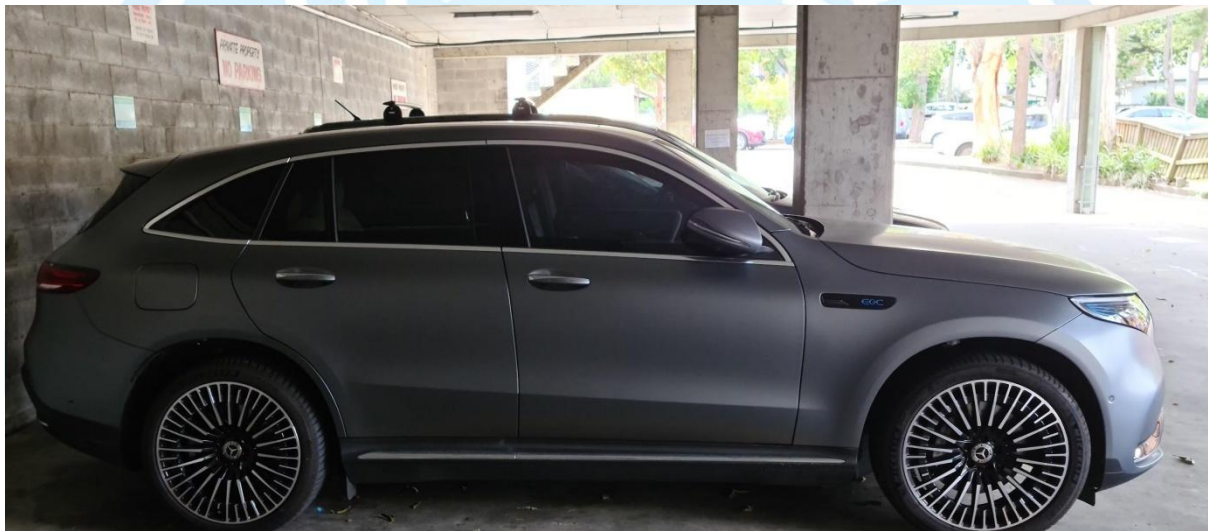


I have to admit that I do have a little “range anxiety” but this is quelled a little bit given that Mercedes has partnered with an organisation called Chargefox which is installing infrastructure around Australia. At the moment, it is possible to travel from Adelaide through

to Brisbane and topping up the battery along the way at appropriate intervals. Normally, the car can travel about 250 kilometres. At that time, you can take a comfort break or have a coffee and 30 minutes later, you have added back enough range to get another 250 kilometres along your journey.

There is a Chargefox App which you can install on your smart phone that will indicate the next outlet. As part of the deal with Mercedes, they have provided a 5 year free account so, should I need to top up the Mercedes on a longer trip, Mercedes Benz will pay the bill.

There is another App for your smart phone called “Plugshare” which provides details of all available charging points nearest to where you are. The car’s own navigation system has a feature that will point and plot you to the nearest charging point. Any charge point outside the Chargefox network can be accessed using your credit card and, so far as I know, purchasing 250 kilometres of range will cost you less than \$20. Whilst it might be slower to top up than putting petrol in the tank, there are zero emissions.



I am not yet brave enough to put theory into practice so I use the car in the Greater Sydney Metropolitan area but have been as far afield as the Hunter Valley and the Southern Highlands and down to Nowra on the South Coast. For longer trips, I will ask Margaret if we can use her Subaru XV.

I recently read that Ampol will start installing chargers in all their petrol stations. That should make life a lot easier for EV owners like me.

Despite the relatively steep cost of acquisition, the pluses are zero running costs, quietness of operation, stunning straight line performance and the general “wow” factor of the car.

Its exterior and interior design are hallmarks of Mercedes excellence and, I have to say, I am happy with the choice I made.