



**The drivers:  
Chas and Janet**



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You could forgive Chas Renner for thinking he’d never own an electric car. After all, his first “work vehicle” was a horse and cart.

“At my age, I thought I was at the end of the line, and with the waiting list, I thought it would be too late by the time my turn came around,” says the 95-year-old.

But since mid 2023, Chas has been happily driving around Perth – and beyond – in his new electric MG. That might make him Australia’s oldest EV driver. He is certainly Chargefox’s oldest customer.

An electrical fitter by trade, Chas also worked as a milkman for 18 years. As a teenager he’d used a horse and cart to make deliveries in Fremantle, and remembers his first car was a 1926 Willys-Overland Whippet.

While he always had a mild interest in the development of EVs, he says it took him a while to get used to his electric MG. It’s an SUV, so is higher and bigger than his last sedan. Driving an automatic car after decades of owning manuals was also an adjustment for Chas.

“Of course, with my electrical background, I was

very interested in the electronic side,” he says. “That took a bit of getting used to, but I’m getting on top of it gradually. This EV is much smoother than my last car.”

It was Chas’s daughter-in-law, Tesla Model 3 owner Janet Renner, who inspired Chas to switch up to electric. “I’ve been talking about EVs for decades,” she says. “Remember the [2006] documentary Who Killed the Electric Car? At least since then. And then when Tesla produced their Roadster, I wanted one.

“Back then I’d been reading a lot of scientific information. EVs were the future. It should have happened 20 years ago,” Janet says, adding that it was the science that was the main appeal of EVs for her, along with the sustainability aspect.

# Charging ahead

Even though their EVs are quite different, both Chas and Janet use the Chargefox network. "We chose Chargefox because of the accessibility," says Janet. "We saw a charger near the local supermarket, and we realised once we downloaded the app that there are many other places."

Janet says charging her car while she's out is better than having to go to a petrol station. "You park your car and go shopping and when you come back you've got 10 per cent or 20 per cent or sometimes more charge. It's better than stopping off at a fuel station in a queue for Cheap Tuesday. And you get a better parking spot."

As a longtime RAC member, Chas likes the fact that Chargefox has a close relationship with the car club: Chargefox owner Australian Motoring Services operates on behalf of Australia's Mobility Clubs (RAC, NRMA, RACV, RACQ, RAA, RACT), whose members receive a 20% discount at Chargefox sites. "You're getting the best of both worlds. RAC is very strong here," Chas says.

"Chargefox has very good coverage along the coast," he adds, estimating he travels up to 300km a week in his MG ZS EV. "I'm looking forward to there being more chargers inland. WA is a big place and it's going to take time, but that will be a good step."

Range anxiety is common with new EV users and Chaz was no exception when he was planning a trip to Busselton, two hours south of Perth. But using the Chargefox app to plan the trip, he felt supported and knew he could recharge half way if needed.

Both Janet and Chas appreciate the savings they enjoy by driving EVs. "I've worked out that over two years I've probably saved close to \$7000 already," Janet says.

How about getting used to operating a charging unit?

"My first time I was lucky enough that someone who had just finished charging helped me," says Janet. "But it's like anything: the first time takes a while, the second time takes half as long and then after that you can do it with your eyes shut."

Chas chooses to use a Chargefox RFID card for his payments: "I have a smart phone, but you have to be pretty smart to use it, so the card is better for me."

Meanwhile, Chas continues to pass his driving tests with flying colours. "I only had to have one last year," he says, "because I got a new doctor and he wanted to check everything. So I went out with an examiner and passed easily."

And hopefully he'll be driving for years to come.



**CHARGEFOX**