

# THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE TRIAL

The South East Councils Climate Change Alliance and four of its member councils, in partnership with the Department of Transport, in 2011 undertook an Electric Vehicle Trial. Two vehicles, the Mitsubishi i-MiEV and the Plug-in Toyota Prius, were trialled with two types of charging stations provided by ChargePoint and BetterPlace. This is their story...

## City of Kingston

Kingston's electric vehicle, a Mitsubishi i-MiEV, was fondly known as EVie. Complete with a video clip and theme song, EVie was promoted as a general use pool car and all Council staff were encouraged to use the car to get a feel for how an electric car drove. By the end of the trial period 50 staff had driven EVie including the Mayor, two Councillors, the CEO and two general managers.

We also held two 'come and try' events at Council's offices. During these times approximately 30 staff drove EVie and all feedback was positive. EVie was fantastic as a general pool vehicle for short trips around the city or to go to meetings in surrounding LGA's. Council's Couriers, who travel up to 60kms a day, often used EVie and were impressed with its manoeuvrability and easy parking.

ChargePoint provided an easy to use charging station for EVie and we experienced no problems. The car was often admired by pedestrians and other drivers. On two occasions, we even had conversations with drivers at traffic lights who noticed the signage and the different look of the car. The car travelled around 3000km, it saved 10,000 black balloons and \$403 on petrol bills.

Council were very impressed with the vehicle and we will be keeping an eye on electric vehicle technology development with the aim to possibly purchase vehicles when they become economically comparable to standard/hybrid vehicles. We would have loved to keep EVie and were thinking of throwing a farewell and good luck party but thought this may have been taking our love of her a little too far!



From left front—Emily Boucher - Team Leader, Environmental Planning; Renae Crosthwaite, Environmental Education Officer and Tony Barrett, Environmental Projects Officer

## Frankston City Council



From left—Mayor Kris Bolam JP and Diane Scott, Team Leader Community Care

Our Aged Services Department used the EV for daily activities and client visits around the municipality, to undertake client assessments for Council's Home and Community Care (HACC) services.

The Mitsubishi i-MiEV was a quiet, small, easy to handle car that was ideal for the Department and the short trips required. In addition, as the EV was smaller than most of Council's existing fleet, staff felt more confident when driving the vehicle.

The ChargePoint charge station was simple to use. We also found that charging the vehicle at the work premises was an efficient use of staff time, as staff were no longer required to refill at the petrol station down the street. By the end of the trial, 30 staff had driven the EV, including many of Council's fleet maintenance staff who showed great interest in the new technology. A 'show and tell' session at our Depot proved to be very popular amongst staff.

We'd absolutely love to keep driving the EV and it has generated a bit of a buzz around the office! Staff were keen to learn more about the new technology and it was difficult returning the EV in the end...

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## City of Casey

It was with much excitement that we drove the shiny new plug in Prius away from Albert Park, watching the in-car display to see when our electric only charge would run out!

Once communication was established between the vehicle and it's charging station, we drove the car on electric-only for the first 20km of each journey. Using the BetterPlace charge point is very easy – just like plugging the kettle in at home!

Staff have been using the car as part of their daily travel for work, and some Councillors have also had a test drive with positive feedback. One member of staff even said that he would like to buy one! Most users commented on the unnerving experience of the car switching off when stopped at a junction, however you soon get used to that after driving it a few times.

On the whole, the driving experience is much the same as any other hybrid vehicle of its size. It worked well as a fleet vehicle, particularly for shorter journeys. The vehicle is very fuel efficient 4l / 100km so far, which is an important consideration for fleet and finance managers! If the electric-only range could be extended, this vehicle would be perfect – electric only for all short trips and electric / petrol hybrid for the occasional longer journey. Casey staff have enjoyed the trial experience and will be looking out for a fully electric vehicle to trial in the future.



From left - Greg Hunt, Executive Officer, SECCCA; Clare Alexander, Climate Change Officer, Cr Lynette Keleher; Cr Simon Curtis; Mayor Shar Balmes

## Mornington Peninsula Shire Council



Mayor Graham Pittock recharging the plug-in Hybrid Prius

The Plug-In Hybrid Prius was shared among various teams throughout the organisation, including Renewable Resources, IT, some engineers, Environmental Protection, Infrastructure Maintenance and Valuations, as well as several Councillors. The Prius was used as a general fleet vehicle, mainly for commuting between the Rosebud, Mornington and Hastings offices and conducting site visits.

The Prius suited the Shire's needs for a general commuting vehicle well, the extended battery range made the Prius perfect for short trips around the Peninsula and the petrol back-up allowed greater freedom in travelling longer distances. It was a very smooth and quiet drive. The BetterPlace charge station was simple to use and we experienced no issues. It also proved to be a very noticeable feature, generating numerous conversations about electric vehicle and charge station technology.

Many of the more tech-savvy staff showed a great deal of interest in the electric vehicle and charging infrastructure. Staff were particularly interested in the differences between the plug-in and conventional Prius models.

Trialling the Plug-In Prius has been a very worthwhile experience for the Shire. With the availability of hybrid vehicles improving, the Shire will consider adding more EVs to its fleet in the future. The Shire is keen to also trial one of the fully electric vehicles later in the year as part of the Department of Transport's Electric Vehicle Trial.