

MAZDA 6E

Sharp pricing, big range claims and a luxe cabin could be game-changing

A GREAT WAY to soften the blow of bad news is to quickly follow it up with something positive. Mazda knows this trick well it seems, because fresh on the heels of confirming it was discontinuing its venerable and much-loved Mazda 6 sedan and wagon, it revealed the car would be replaced with the one you see here: the Mazda 6e.

Boasting a striking exterior and richly trimmed interior, the all-electric 6e is Mazda's first proper tilt at an EV (slow-selling MX-30 aside) and it should be priced competitively. Mazda has committed to a starting price under \$55,000 which pits it head-to-head with the Tesla Model 3. Another key distinction is, unlike most other Mazdas, the 6e isn't built in Japan. It's made in China in a joint venture with Changan and shares its platform and hardware with the Deepal SL03.

This raises the question: does it drive like a proper Mazda, with

the kind of sporty handling and excellent steering the brand is famous for? We had a brief experience of a left-hand-drive pre-production model ahead of its mid-2026 Australian arrival to find out.

A range of trim levels is expected, with our test car reflecting the likely flagship. Lush suede and leather trim feature inside, as do frameless doors, diamond-stitched seats and a strong sense of space front and rear.

Storage is generous, the boot is deep (around 400 litres, Mazda says) and there's a useful 72-litre frunk, too. The main ergonomic miss is the driving position, which feels too high for taller drivers and is paired with

limited steering wheel reach.

The interior tech is also a big departure for Mazda. A huge 14.6-inch touchscreen controls almost everything, Tesla-style, and the fonts and layout lack Mazda's usual polish.

Under the skin, every Australian 6e will use a 78kWh battery driving a single rear motor producing 190kW and around 320Nm. Mazda says driving range will be more than 500km WLTP. As for dynamics, Mazda Europe has reworked the suspension and steering to inject some brand DNA, and the result is a comfortable, composed ride with decent body control. Acceleration is brisk, although the steering remains overly quick and light on feel, and the brakes lack Mazda's typical finesse.

So, does it feel like a Mazda? Not really, at least not yet. But as a stylish, well-priced electric sedan, the 6e still shapes up as a compelling entrant to Australia's growing EV market. – Alex Inwood

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Powertrain: single e-motor + 78kWh battery **Power:** 190kW **Torque:** 320Nm (estimated) **Range:** Over 500km (WLTP, estimated) **Gearbox:** 1-speed automatic **ANCAP:** Not rated **Price:** Under \$55,000 (plus ORC)

+ Exterior looks; luxe cabin; range claim – Vague steering; lacks physical controls; charge rate unknown **Rating** ★★☆☆