

When I bought my NC back in 2006 there was no option for heated seats in Australia.

Interestingly, at the time, Canadian models automatically came with heated seats, and it was an option in America and England.

Remember that all NCs came from a single production line in Hiroshima and so the option could have been added easily to the Australian cars.

I purchased my NC when I was living in the north-west coast of Tasmania, and so those crisp, cool morning drives with the roof down and the sea on my right-hand side as I drove into work in Burnie would have been perfect with heated seats.

Now, I'm going to go out on a limb here: I do not like faux leather seats.

When we bought our 'shopping trolley', also known as a Mazda CX-3, I purposefully bought the most "specced-out" model I could get but still with cloth seats. We have a Land Cruiser with faux leather. I subsequently purchased fitted denim

seat covers for that, and it has never been more comfortable. I have owned one car with Napa leather seats and I found that reasonably comfortable although still a bit slippery and slidey on a hot day.

So, when the faux leather seats in the NC began to crack, I saw this as an opportunity to get them re-upholstered* with cloth and, as a bonus, I could fit heated seat pads at the same time.

Note that you can fit the heated seats without reupholstering your car. The heating panels can go under your current seat covering.

I matched the original sandstone colour for my so-called Limited Edition NC with a cut velour upholstery – a totally impractical colour for stains but it looks amazing. Being cut velour, the seats breathe very well in hot weather, feel snugly in winter and we get just the right amount of friction so that we're not

slipping and sliding on the seats on twisty roads. In fact, I find these seats just as grippy as the factory Recaros that are fitted to some of the NC models. I also had the door flashes redone to match the new upholstery.

When I was looking at doing the change in 2023, I found that Club member Geoff Roche had already fitted heated seats to his earlier NC; he sent me a copy of an earlier **mxtra** that featured an article on how to fit the heating panels into the seats.

A link to that original article (2013) is here (https://mx5vic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/seat_heater.pdf), so I won't go through the whole process again here. Suffice it to say that it was very simple piece of wiring for me to do as I had to remove the seats anyway to get them re-upholstered.

I bought the three-step level option from Power Technologies Australia P/L, and found the switching is really easy to use. I've



Old seat with marking for added lumbar support



Seat heater pads



New seat switching

seats in Australia?



... and how to fix that



New seat material with the heater switch (circled) in the seat base

checked with John Osmotherly from Power Technologies Australia and the pads are still available, but they've upgraded them to a carbon fibre mat and a newer control switch.

There are other after-market seat pads available too, so shop around. At the time I found Power Technologies to be cost-competitive and very easy to deal with. *Be aware that it is a small business, and so emails are not necessarily answered immediately.*

So I ended up with reupholstered seats, new door flashes and heated seats for about the same price as a set of second-hand Recaros would have cost me.

*[*When I say "re-upholstered", I also had some extra foam added for lumbar and under-thigh support individually tailored to both my wife and myself. Having seats tailored to our own needs*

was a significant bonus for our aging spines.]

We are really happy with the result.

On a cold and chilly morning driving out of Wangaratta on the way to Beechworth to begin a Club run, we are toasty warm and have big smiles on our faces. When we hit the windy to road to Stanley I feel well-anchored to the seat without my hips feeling like they are they wedged into the seat bolsters. If the day is hot I am not getting home with a wet back against a slippery seat.

Is it worth the money? Is it a value-add to a good little car? **Definitely.**

Is it critical? No.

Would I do it again two years after getting it done? **Absolutely. ■**



The newly-covered seats with matching door flashes

■ **Please note:** All "Tech Talk" information is provided as a guide only. All work is carried out at the owner's risk.