

Tesla Uber Driver's High-Mileage Model 3 Hits Over 417,000km – Battery Still Strong, Community Rallies Behind 'Mr Sparkle'

Brisbane, Australia
February 4, 2026

A Brisbane Uber driver's 2021 Tesla Model 3 has become a shining example of electric vehicle durability, clocking more than 417,000 kilometres with its battery retaining impressive health. Nathan Merritt, a dedicated rideshare operator and Tesla enthusiast, has turned his car – nicknamed "Mr Sparkle" – into a real-world proof point that EVs can handle heavy daily use far beyond common expectations. Merritt, who has completed over 38,000 Uber trips since buying the Model 3 Standard Range+ in late 2020, uses the vehicle full-time for rideshare and private transfers. Despite the intense workload, the car has required only minimal repairs over the years. Recent battery health checks show it retaining around 88% of original capacity after hundreds of thousands of kilometres – figures that challenge widespread concerns about EV battery life.

On January 30, while charging in Brisbane, the vehicle suffered a sudden shutdown, locking Merritt out. Tesla Roadside Assistance responded quickly, replacing the low-voltage battery on-site. Further diagnostics pointed to an issue with the high-voltage pack, requiring a tow to a service centre. Early worries about an expensive battery replacement proved unfounded, with repair costs now expected to be under \$1,000 – a fraction of what many might assume for such mileage. "This is the kind of story that answers the question every EV owner gets from friends and family: 'What happens when the battery dies?'" Merritt said. "Mr Sparkle shows these batteries can last a very long time, even under constant hard use. Compare that to a petrol car hitting similar kilometres – major repairs would almost certainly have been far more expensive by now.

As the founder of the Facebook group. Tesla Owners Australia – the country's largest Tesla community on Facebook with over 116,000 members – Merritt has shared his ownership journey openly. The group fosters helpful discussions, real-world advice, and support for current and prospective Tesla owners. Many members credit Merritt's updates and insights for helping them make informed decisions about EVs. When the recent issue arose, group members encouraged Merritt to start a GoFundMe to cover repairs and aim for the half-million-kilometre mark. The campaign, launched at community suggestion, has raised about \$1,500 from voluntary donations. Merritt has committed to directing any surplus funds to charity. While the fundraiser drew some debate online – including coverage from CarExpert noting mixed reactions – it highlights the supportive spirit of Australia's Tesla community.

As Australia's most helpful unpaid Tesla salesperson, Merritt has done more than most to promote the brand. Through his 38,000+ rides and active role in the Facebook group, he has showcased Tesla's technology to tens of thousands of passengers and helped countless others embrace electric driving. Given his contributions, it would be a fitting gesture if Tesla recognised Merritt's efforts by providing him with a new vehicle equipped with Full Self-Driving capability. This would allow him to demonstrate the revolutionary tech to potentially another 100,000 Uber riders. While many currently view Full Self-Driving as a novelty, experts anticipate unsupervised autonomy arriving in Australia in the coming years. When it does, it could be truly life-changing – restoring independence for the blind, those medically unfit to drive, and elderly Australians who might otherwise lose mobility after failing age-related driving tests.

Merritt's story reinforces that Tesla vehicles are built tough for Australian roads, offering low running costs and exceptional longevity. As the nation shifts toward cleaner transport, high-mileage successes like Mr Sparkle help build confidence in the EV future.

Media Contact:

Paul Collins

Tesla Supporter

Phone: 0419 722 807

Email: paul.r.collins@gmail.com