

# LEAPMOTOR C10

**READ ALL ABOUT IT  
BEFORE YOU TAKE THE LEAP**



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tantalised by how cheaply they can buy these vehicles.

Most Australian buyers have an approximate type of vehicle in mind – these days usually a 4-wheel-drive 4-door Ute or an SUV. There's plenty to choose from. An overriding purchasing factor is price.

Long warranties sweeten the deals – to give buyers confidence. If you're buying an Xpeng, Zeekr, Jaecoo, Skyworth or Leapmotor, you want to know it's more than the shape you had in mind, and cheap. All cars have lots of tech these days to meet the ANCAP safety requirements, so if your last car was a few years old, any new car seems high-tech.

But what happens as the market develops? Not every company importing new brands will succeed. Discounting and even longer warranties get offered. However, if an importer fails, what happens with the cars they sold? The long warranty will be useless. Parts availability will dry up (and often was poor anyway). Values plummet. The cars head to the grave and the owner regrets the purchase.

The Leapmotor I tested for a week is from a brand half-owned by Stellantis (makers of Chrysler, Jeep, Fiat, Alfa Romeo, Opel, Peugeot and more). In Australia, the Fiat Chrysler distribution company handles the brand. Neither are fly-by-nighters likely to leave Leapmotor buyers high and dry.

So how good is the C10? It looks pretty good, not aggressively ugly like so many of its competitors.

The interior is sparse in a modern way and impressively spacious, with excellent back seat room. The test car was fully electric, with decent performance, handling and braking.

**W**e are being bombarded by many new Chinese brands, vying for buyers' attention. Most are relatively new names from the hundreds of startups supported by the Chinese government.

Lots of new Australian companies have been set up to distribute new Chinese brands, some with little experience,



Well-calibrated electronic driving aids and impressively spacious interior, but plush-looking seats offer little support.

The calibration of the electronic driving aids is pretty well resolved. So far, so good.

On the downside, an ex-BMW engineer obviously designed the counter-intuitive indicator stalk. You need to explore screens to make simple adjustments such as the external mirrors and direction of vent airflow. It's an almost button-free car.

To get in, you tap a credit card size key on the driver's mirror (only) and the car unlocks and awakens – unless there's rain on the mirror which you need to wipe off. Place the card flat in the centre console and it's ready to go upon gear selection. When you leave the car, it's all active until you tap the mirror. Trying to be a bit too clever hasn't worked.

The seats initially feel plush but offer little support, quickly leading to a numb bum. I liked the huge panoramic glass roof. At \$45,888 for the fully electric and \$49,888 for a more sensible hybrid, the pricing is competitive. However, to boost sales, lower pricing in driveaway deals for old stock are being offered.

For the money you could get a worse design, a worse driving car, one from a dodgy importer, or a manufacturer who won't support the brand. Yes, you could do a lot worse – and there's plenty worse out there. ■