

FROM THE ARCHIVES ***CAR TEMPERATURE GAUGES***

By Neville Barlow

Some years ago, I owned a Nissan Fairlady 280Z. It was a 2 door 4-seater sports car. I found it a very versatile vehicle and I could pack in 200 dozen eggs that I delivered around the Waikato and Coromandel. To my delight it had a good range of instruments including an engine oil temperature gauge and an outside air temperature gauge which was quite a novelty for a 1979 car.

I often wondered what range of temperature it would show as I had seen 35 deg. But thought it might stop at 0 deg. However, on a trip to a meeting one cold Waikato night, I discovered it reading minus 5 deg.

Sensors for these external digital thermometers are usually found on the inside of the front bumpers and are not as you might think, affected by wind chill created by the moving vehicle.

In a recent article in the N.Z. Herald Driven supplement, writer Dave Moore discusses the merits of what he calls car thermometers. In tests conducted in N.S.W., with a control temperature of 30 deg. From 27 cars during the 2012 Drive Australia Car of the Year, it was found that they varied widely between 16 deg and 37 deg.

However, the average temperature over all vehicles was 29.2 deg. The hottest cars were painted black and the coolest ones white. A Nissan GTR reported the mercury at no higher than 16 deg, while a ford FPV GT showed 35 deg.

This exercise suggests that with modern cars these devices should be seen as an approximate temperature. However, my experience has been different so perhaps it is the make of car you drive that really matters.

Neville