



***Around Australia Challenge Update
- DAY 3: Sat 29-Dec-2001 -***

***Buladelah (N.S.W.) to
Murwillumbah/Tweed Heads
(NSW-QLD border)***

600 KM



Temperatures were rising as the team left Buladelah at 8.40 AM on Day 3. Weather conditions were patchy and fresh bush-fire outbreaks were evident at Kempsey and Coff's Harbour.

Tony reported that temperatures in the solar car reached 40 degrees C but conditions when running are helped by having a good airflow inside the solar car body-work. Special NASA shaped ducts pick up air at a high pressure point under the rear of the solar car and it is directed to both the driver and the bank of solar tracker electronics behind the driver.

Difficulty continued with the solar car trailer brakes and wheel clearances which required Jack McArthur to seek further repairs in Kempsey.

Holiday traffic was slowing the Aurora-RMIT 101 progress and as a result the battery is more full than anticipated. The solar car is controlled by monitoring the battery capacity compared to the computer plan for what it should be at any given point in the day. This is the key strategy for completing each day on schedule and is termed the 'strategy'. Peter Pudney is the team strategist and creates the computer models for the day's running pattern.



Day 3, Kempsey Tourist Information Centre (click for a larger image)



Day 3, The Pacific Highway is closed, so we take the scenic route (click for a larger image)

Good media coverage especially from the ABC in Kempsey ensured a good reception of interested onlookers and Tony has spoken several times with radio station 3AK in Melbourne.

The first maintenance requirement on the solar car was needed in Grafton to replace a leaking front tyre. Otherwise the Aurora-RMIT 101 solar car is working beautifully. Rafael and Tony continue to share the driving duties and Rafael's family in Mexico contacted the Aurora office to pass their best wishes on to the team.

Very slow traffic conditions north of Ballina and through Byron Bay including a detour past a major road accident had the team dropping behind schedule. Light rain ensued and finally a sudden thunderstorm caused a serious water-leak in the solar car shorting out two of the seven electronic solar trackers. This occurred at Murwillumbah at 7.15 PM, 31 Km short of the intended destination for the overnight stop at Tweed Heads. The distance for the day was about 590 Km.



Day 3, the scenic route (click for a larger image)



Day 3, Soaking wet at Murwillumbah (click for a larger image)