



**Around Australia Challenge Update
- DAY 7: Wed 2-Jan-2002 -**

**Mackay (QLD) to
Pentland (QLD)**

641 KM



Further overnight repairs had all but one solar panel up and running and dry if cloudy skies. The hospitality at McGuire's pub, at 17 Wood Street in Mackay was greatly appreciated by the team as was the welcome from Bill Boyd, Channel 7 and the Daily Mercury. As a result of the excellent media support along the way the team reports that many motorists know of the solar car and give the convoy plenty of encouragement with flashing headlamps and friendly waves.

The overcast conditions from Mackay to Bowen changed the team strategy for energy use. The solar car speed was adjusted to the speed that the light could sustain which was about 70 KPH. At this speed some of the solar energy was directed to increasing the battery charge. Departure time was 10.15 AEST.

Beyond Bowen the skies cleared and the team reset its hopes on making the scheduled stop overnight at Pentland. The Aurora-RMIT 101 solar car slipped through Townsville at about 4.00 PM AEST

The weather watch showed a cyclone warning for the Gulf of Carpentaria and evidence of this was clearly seen by the team at Charters Towers long before Pentland. Somehow the storm positioned itself a bit north of the highway and the really bad



Day 7, Bowen. (click for a larger image)



Day 7 Definitely Townsville and heading west. (click for a larger image)



weather was narrowly averted.

Day 7 Stopover at Pentland,
Queensland.(click for a larger image)

The team arrived at Pentland at 7.50 PM AEST
[6.50 PM Queensland time]

Overnight work included brake adjustment,
continued efforts to repair the last solar panel and
a bit of adjustment to the telemetry system.

The great news is that in spite of bushfires,
storms, cloud and water in the electrical system
the team is on schedule. Day 7 saw another 641
KM completed at an average speed during
running time of about 75 KPH.

A total distance of 3519 has been achieved in
reaching Pentland and the objective for Day 8 is
to reach Mount Isa, cyclone permitting. The total
distance will then have been 4165 KM not quite
one third of the total distance planned for the
Round Australia Challenge. This will exceed the
longest journey ever done by an Aurora solar car,
that completed from Perth to Sydney in 1994 with
Dick Smith and Australian Geographic.