



Around Australia Challenge Update
DAY 17: Sat 12-Jan-2002

Minilya (WA) to Geraldton (WA)	621 KM
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Not a cloud in the sky but very hot once again. Departure from Minilya Roadhouse was at 8.30 AM after getting a good charge in the batteries from the sun. Another daily trip of over 600 KM was the task.

In still conditions the Aurora-RMIT 101 solar car handled a cruising speed of 90 KPH for most of the day. The team even had time for a detour onto the jetty at Carnarvon although they finally admitted that this was a piece of poor navigation.

Most of the day was run without the telemetry system working. The antenna that sends the data signals from the solar car to the lead car had slipped into the bottom half of the solar car, and refused to send any data. This was repaired before the end of the day and delivered the surprise that the solar car had used less energy than expected

The other technical matter being addressed was to see if the solar trackers could be set for even more solar panel efficiency. Unfortunately without the telemetry working it was not possible to see whether an adjustment actually succeeded.

A headwind late in the day and a number of hills slowed the team as they arrived into their planned evening stop at Geraldton; the day distance covered being 630 KM.



Day 17, Camels, wombats and kangaroos. (click for a larger image)



Day 17, Jack McArthur repairs another one. (click for a larger image)



Day 17, Carnarvon, West Australia. (click for a larger image)

The solar car attracts lots of attention from motorists and if they have a 2 way radio they can talk to the Aurora team-members as they pass. All support cars and the trailers advertise the fact that the convoy is using Channel 20. In one conversation over-heard by the writer, the much asked question about 'how fast will it go?' came up. The Aurora-RMIT 101 solar car has reached speeds up to 135 KPH and more is theoretically possible. To do this both solar and battery energy is used. Driving the solar car through the air is what uses the most energy so driving at speeds beyond what is necessary is not done often.

Tomorrow, Perth.