



Around Australia Challenge Update
DAY 22: Thurs 17-Jan-2002

**Nullarbor (SA) to
Port Augusta (SA)**

780 KM
(new distance record on solar power alone)



This was going to be tough because it was imperative that the schedule to reach Port Augusta be achieved if the Aurora-RMIT 101 team was to meet its appearance schedule in Adelaide and its finishing schedule in Melbourne late on Saturday afternoon.

Weather conditions were cool enough at 24 C but the persisting headwind would slow things up.

The arrival into Nullarbor the previous evening had been with no battery charge left and the lateness of arrival ensured that no charge session in the setting sun was possible. So the morning of Day 22 was without any battery reserve. The first task was to get 6 or 7 amp hours into the batteries before moving off.

The attempted speed was set at 75 KPH. Before long the destination missed the previous day, Yatala Roadhouse was behind the team and Ceduna lay ahead. Just before entering Ceduna the team were stopped at a fruit fly inspection station and for the second time on the trip, even the onions were confiscated.

In talking to Peter Pudney on the NEC satellite telephones the sound of the wind almost drowned out the conversation. Peter said that Port Augusta looked unlikely!

After midday the speed was picked up to 80



Day 22, 2:00PM. Driver change at Ceduna foreshore (SA). [\(click for a larger image\)](#)



Day 22, 2:00PM. Driver change at Ceduna foreshore (SA). [\(click for a larger image\)](#)

KPH as the wind both eased and changed direction to be a side wind to the direction of travel for the solar car. The Aurora-RMIT 101 solar car has been cleverly designed to be extremely aerodynamic. Clive Humphris an Aurora team member since before 1987 and Ford Australia's leading expert in aerodynamics designed the shape of the solar car. RMIT students have undertaken considerable research testing in wind tunnels to refine the shape and the result is that this car is the best in solar car racing. One very good aspect is that it performs well in side wind as it showed in shadowing the powerful Alpha Centauri solar car from Holland which beat Aurora-RMIT 101 in the 2001 World Solar Challenge last November.

The afternoon must have been an endurance test as the convoy went through Kimba, then Iron Knob along the Eyre Highway.

Finally at 8.40 PM, right on sunset, the convoy rolled into Shoreline Caravan Park in Port Augusta with batteries spent. A total running time for the day of 10 hours and 46 minutes saw an average speed of 72.45 KPH achieved for the whole day and a new world record set: 780 KM on solar energy alone in on road conditions over a single day.

The best day distance achieved by Aurora-RMIT 101 in the World Solar Challenge was 757 KM on 21 November 2001. The WSC conditions rules require that teams start at 8.00AM in a day and finish by 5.00 PM. However battery power is used along with solar energy. The Dutch team hold the record for day distance in the WSC when they covered 813 KM on 21 November 2001 but used considerable battery energy to do this. On 24 January 2000, the Aurora 101 solar car set a distance record of 830 km, a journey from Sydney to Melbourne. This run also used considerable battery energy.

Two days to go and an appointment with Senator Natasha Stott Despoja at 12.00 PM at the Adelaide Town Hall on Friday provides the stress for tomorrow. A total distance of 11,987 KM has been covered by the end of Day 22. Right on schedule.

Want to know more about the RMIT Aurora Solar Car Around Australia Team?



Day 22, Admiring locals at Ceduna (SA). [\(click for a larger image\)](#)



Day 22, Near Kimba (SA). [\(click for a larger image\)](#)

Click [here](#) for the team's biographies page.