

# SunRace 2003



## Daily Report

Day 6 - Thursday 20th February, 2003

After a sunny finish in Melbourne yesterday the weather this morning was overcast and the two solar car teams were looking for any sign of sunshine whilst Don Elliott of the Chisholm team was pretending not to be overly pleased.

The Victorian State Minister for the Environment the Hon John Thwaites had the official role of getting the fleet of competitors away at 10.00 AM. Aurora-RMIT 101 led the way and the team was pleased to have the telemetry system fully operational again.



Victoria's Environment Minister, the Hon. John Thwaites, flags away Aurora RMIT 101 at the Melbourne Museum start at the Melbourne to Albury leg of SunRace 2003

Official start of timing was 50 km away and the slow police convoy taking the competitors out of Melbourne combined with the grey skies used up much more energy than expected. In fact the timing start point was moved to Seymour and race officials decided to let the competitors trailer their cars to that point.

The skies never cleared and were made worse by smoke from the bushfires that had ravaged northern Victoria. The RMIT team was thankful for the assistance of the telemetry system in carefully watching the energy flow; speeds never reached more than 80 kph. Two flat tyres also slowed the day down. This caused the team to use their spare motor for the first time. This had been the one repaired in Melbourne after the race had started. Reported solar power never exceeded 350 watts, compared to the maximum of 1200 watts that would be achieved in clear sunlight.

At the starting line the Museum was featuring a travelling exhibition about space and specifically about Mars. This has an Aurora connection as some of the solar cells used on the Aurora-RMIT 101 solar car are left-overs from the Mars Lander program.

Carol Bates left the team in Melbourne allowing the RMIT team to have a high school member of the Peterborough team travel with the race leader.

Tomorrow, the leg from Albury to Canberra is considered to be the hardest day of the race and it will be, unless there is good sun for recharging in the morning. The weather forecast is for rain.