



## 2003 World Solar Challenge

Darwin > Adelaide 19 - 28 October 2003

**Report 4**  
**Wednesday 15 October 2003**

### Preparations for Competing in the 2003 World Solar Challenge

After the successful day yesterday where the Aurora 101 solar car covered 350 fast kilometres the team had a slow start to the activities of Wednesday. Rather than another long day on the road, we decided to prepare the car for a test run at the Hidden Valley racetrack. This venue is open all week for solar car teams and already there are 10 teams stationed there including the Southern Aurora group from Hamilton.

Darwin was noticeably hotter and more humid than yesterday and it couldn't help but rain by midday. In fact the whole afternoon looked threatening and by the time we did get to the track it was spitting again.

There's a new qualifying innovation this year. Instead of testing the solar car's top speed on the main straight of the Hidden Valley racetrack, the starting grid positions will be determined by fastest lap times. Hidden Valley is a 2.9km circuit with hills and tight curves, generally hard going for endurance solar cars.

However, this is not so different from the Aurora experience at the Suzuka Formula One track where we raced in July. Mark Gilligan, the only driver of our three nominees with Suzuka experience, was chosen to drive the practice laps. After three or four laps he was starting to move quickly, reaching 115km/h at the end of the straight and finally recording his best lap of 2:20 before coming in to change tyres.

We saw practice runs from four or five other teams including the new solar car from Bockum University in Germany, who were running their car seriously for only the first time. Other international teams at the track were from Malaysia, Puerto Rico, Canada, Japan and France.





The solar panel master, Hans Gochermann, was at the track to see at least six cars using solar panels beautifully made at his factory in Germany.



The new Southern Aurora team appreciated any help they could get in completing their first car in time for Saturday time trials.





Tomorrow, scrutineering commences and Aurora is scheduled first starting at 9am. We hope to have few difficulties although the scrutineers are careful and thorough about what they allow to travel on public roads. We are trying to gather more information about our solar panel and electronic component temperatures, so we hope to have free time in the afternoon to do this.

One important component of the day was the watermelon! Caroline had purchased this the day before and refused any one access to it until the afternoon of today. This is the best of the local produce and it was totally devoured. Team manager David stopped complaining. He loves watermelon!

Tonight we are back preparing the car for tomorrow morning and looking forward to dinner. Actually, the last two days has shown that we are well prepared. Our car is running fast and we may have a bit of 'tourist' time before the race.