



2003 World Solar Challenge

Darwin > Adelaide 19 - 28 October 2003

Report 5

Thursday 16 October 2003

Preparations for Competing in the 2003 World Solar Challenge

The days are flying by. Today we were scheduled to be the first team to go through scrutineering, giving the officials their first practice for the two days of inspection of the 26 extraordinary solar cars that will commence the journey to Adelaide on Sunday morning.

The Aurora 101 team were a bit jumpy, arriving at the Foskey Pavilion of the Darwin showgrounds an hour before our schedule. The officials were only just setting up. So we sat in our convoy of Ford support cars and waited.



First the team was registered. We have 11 in the team. Then individual insurance purchased. Then third party property insurance. Then we received passes for the official functions in both Darwin and Adelaide and moved on to the driver weigh in. Stella and Mark loaded up with lots of water so as to minimise the amount of extra ballast needed to get to the minimum of 80 kg driver weight. Stella let us down---she needed 14kg of extra weight even though she weighed in 6kg over her normal weight. Mark needed 4 kg and Tony was just under the 80kg limit. The drivers also signed documents to say that they would be driving without crash helmets as the temperature and visibility advantages were considered more important.



Next came the fixing of the event sticker. Then the weigh in. The Aurora 101 solar car registered 190kg, a bit heavier than in Japan because of a heavier battery pack. Then the road safety check where lights, turn signals and horn are checked. The car layout for electrical safety was next and we needed several more shields and high voltage warning signs. The solar car is configured at 175 volts so warnings are important. Finally the check of the battery system to ensure it met the race rules. In the case of Aurora 101 we are using the most sophisticated lithium ion polymer battery technology so only 30kg of battery weight is allowed.



After all of this we passed scrutineering satisfactorily.

We were equally interested in the scrutineering of the Southern Aurora sister car. Finally, they also passed. What a milestone for this new team.



The end of the day saw the Aurora team accept an invitation from the 2001 Nuon team from Holland to their party. The new team members were also there so it was quite a party. Lots of food, pool dunking and solar car stories. A few technical secrets passed between the teams..... maybe. We are looking forward to seeing the Dutch super car tomorrow when they are scheduled for their own meeting with the scrutineering team.
