

AURORA 101 TO SHINE IN GREECE

Solar car team in quest for pre-Olympic Medal

Melbourne based Aurora 101 solar car team leaves Australia on Saturday, 15 May for the first in a trio of international events in Greece, Japan and China.

Competing in the Phaethon 2004 event, as part of Greece's Cultural Olympiad, the seven member team hopes to convert silver into gold over the reigning World Solar Challenge champions, the Dutch team Nuna. Aurora will meet entries from 8 other countries, including Japan's Suzuka Dream Cup winner, TIGA.

The week long 750 km journey will leave from Athens' Olympic Stadium on 22 May, and journey to the Games original site in Ancient Olympia, to Delphi and back to Athens and has attracted cars from Brazil, Taiwan, Germany, USA, Netherlands, Japan, Greece and Italy.

In a first for Greece, and officially sanctioned by the FIA, the Phaethon 2004 solar car event has been organised by the

Hellenic Institute of Electric Vehicles - HELIEV, Automobile and Touring Club of Greece - ELPA, and Technical Press S.A. - 4 Wheels magazine. Greece's cultural links with Melbourne ensured Aurora received the first invitation issued by the organisers.

Aurora's self-funded and volunteer team all have close ties with the Australian and European automotive industries, with long term support from Ford Motor Company. Kon Kotsonis and Seona Candy will perform lead driver roles.

As a practice run for Phaethon 2004, the Aurora 101 solar car recently completed a one week tour of Tasmania - at the invitation of Aurora Energy - visiting 13 schools, technical colleges and universities, as well as celebrating Hobart Sporting Car Club's 50th Anniversary and driving on roads used in the Targa Tasmania.

Not only will Aurora share its world renowned solar car technology during the Phaethon run; its escort vehicle will also cause considerable interest: a Ford Galaxy MPV - only recently released in Greece.

The Aurora team, with Hans Gochermann, has pioneered a new solar cell shingling process. A mix of solar cells from three different space programs cover its sleek black shape. Some of the cells were previously destined for use in the original Mars lander program. Aurora's specially developed high energy Kokam Lithium Polymer batteries, like the latest used in advanced mobile phones, achieve high energy density and efficient electrical flow. This effort to achieve high efficiency is matched in the Australian technologies in the CSIRO designed wheelmotor, the Tritium motor controller and AERL solar trackers.

The 64 member volunteer Aurora group, with Australia's most famous motor racing personality, Sir Jack Brabham, as its patron, is acknowledged as the world's most accomplished solar car team - holding 8 solar car world records including world records set by previous champions Honda (Japan), Biel (Switzerland) and Queens (Canada). The team has competed in all 7 World Solar Challenge events - a 3,000 km race from Darwin to Adelaide - becoming the Champions in 1999 and coming in a close second to the super Dutch team, Nuna, in 2001 and 2003.

Following Phaethon 2004, Aurora will compete in Japan's Suzuka Dream Cup in late July, and attend Michelin's Bibendum in Shanghai, mid-October.