



15 - 19 March 2004

Report 2 - 15th March

Monday 15th March

At 6am it appeared that we would get some good sunshine for the morning visit to the icebreaker "Aurora Australis". Sure enough, by the time we arrived at Princess Wharf, the big red ship had caught the full sun and we were ready to make the association with the similarly named Aurora 101 Super Solar Car.



Nick Lovibond from the Australian Antarctic Division had been tracking the return of the Aurora Australis from Macquarie Island, and was down at the wharf to greet us.

Just to make it more authentic, Judy Hennessy of Aurora Designs brought some of her fabulous heavy-duty Antarctic clothing to dress the Aurora team members.



Dr John Storey of the UNSW has completed excellent experiments in Antarctica to show how effective solar energy can be. As solar cells get cooler, they become more efficient. So, the possibility of solar powered vehicles crossing Antarctica may not be so far away. This photo shoot was a lot of fun, but we needed to be at the Aurora Energy Depot in Moonah by 9am, and the fastest way seemed to be to drive the solar car through Hobart's peak-hour morning traffic. "Head turning" was the right phrase for the trip to Moonah. There we met Denise Barker who has been organising this trip in Tasmania, and many of the workers from the Moonah Depot. A common question was, "where would we put the ladders?"!

Our next appointment was down the Channel Highway to visit the Woodbridge High School. This school had entered the model solar car competition, and several of the students had seen the Aurora 101 Solar Car in Adelaide last October at the finish of the 2004 World Solar Challenge. Chris Barnes, of Woodbridge High had organised for many of the class groups to come and hear about the Aurora 101 Solar Car. One of their senior groups was very interested in the construction techniques, as they plan to build a solar-powered bicycle.



Aurora Energy's professional communications staff member Christine Ward even consented to hop into the car herself.



We decided to have the solar car returned to Hobart under its own power, and the 40km of twisty and hilly roads was good practice for what we anticipate in Greece. Again, "head turning" would have described the trip!

At 4pm we rolled into the Engineering Faculty at the University of Tasmania to meet Associate Professor Vishy Kari. Unexpectedly, Vishy runs an automotive section at the University, and is heavily involved in Intelligent Cars. He is promoting a hydrogen-powered demonstration program. He proudly says that there are 10 PhD students in his section, a substantially high number. Having been in the University of Tasmania for 10 years, Vishy had previously graduated from Melbourne University, studying under Professor Harry Watson, President of the Society of Automotive Engineers.



That was the last visit for the day, except for a great evening with Norm McIlfratrick, outgoing CEO of Aurora Energy.

One more big day in Hobart tomorrow before the Aurora group moves north to Launceston and the North-West coast.

