



2005 World Solar Challenge

Darwin > Adelaide 25th September - 2 October 2005

Report 1 Sunday 18th September 2005

Imagine twenty seven degrees in Darwin. Hard to believe, but that was it on Sunday morning. By 11:30 am we had picked up our convoy of Mazda support vehicles and our two trailers, moving the lot to Hidden Valley racetrack.



Seven Aurora members had arrived: Todd Palmer, Jack McArthur, Kon Kotsonis, Andris Samsons, Evan Wineland, Eli Thurrowgood, and David Fewchuck.



The track was devoted to deafening motorcycle racing, reminding us of our recent trip to the Suzuka track in Japan. The Aurora 101 solar car had rested in Melbourne for just nine days before taking the trip to Darwin. So we were

anxious to see whether our intense work in Melbourne gave us a smooth running car. Four other international teams were already set up at Hidden Valley. The extremely bad luck story rested with MIT. They had shipped their car to Australia straight after the completion of the North American Solar Challenge. Both the solar car trailer and the solar car within the trailer had not been adequately tied down within the trailer. So we saw the damage on solar panels to their solar car and the dented front and rear of their trailer. Also in America MIT had suffered solar cell damage from a hail storm. Lots of work ahead before next Sunday.



Two new European teams: Raedthuys from the University of Twente in the Netherlands, and Umicore from Belgium were hard at work. Twente had a new small solar car tire which we were seeing for the first time and we were greatly impressed with the workmanship in the Umicore car. The other arrival was Sunstang from the University of Western Ontario.



The other news we heard was that Nuna, the Dutch favorite, had an accident last Friday while testing on the Arnhem Highway.



Anyway, we had our own stuff to do. Our new battery pack needed charging and installation for the first time. Jack had the task of setting suspension heights with the change in vehicle weight. The solar array needed a careful clean from the dirt it collected on the trip from Darwin. Finally we were able to get Andris out in the car for eight cautious but pretty smooth laps of the track.





Compared to previous solar car events (and we have been in every one of them) this seemed like a dream run. It gave us a chance to clean up and get down to Darwin city for dinner. Just a few solar car notables included: Hans and Markette Gochermann, event director Chris Selwood and his terrific assistant Di Gameau.



Tomorrow two more members arrive: Daniel Mills and David Sims-Williams. We also hope to hear whether strategist Peter Pudney will be joining the team.