



2005 World Solar Challenge

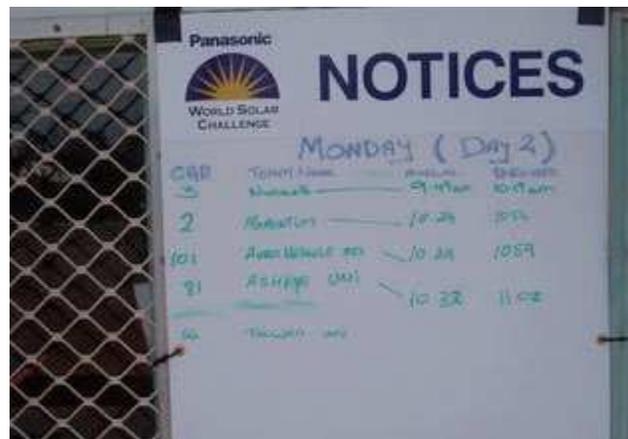
Darwin > Adelaide 25th September - 2 October 2005

Report 9 Monday 26th September 2005

Our campsite for the first night was a strip of red dusty road that ran parallel to the Stuart Highway. The occasional noise of road-trains didn't bother us too much, but the congregation of flies certainly was persistent. In the morning the road was dotted with tents, swags and sleeping bags as we all rose before sunrise.



The most important job was to point the solar array of the car directly at the sun in order to put electrical charge into the batteries. The race rules do not allow any other method.



Rebecca had breakfast going which brought out the innovative nature of breakfast utensils for those that forgot to bring

them. The hot water for coffee was delivered to the cup by ladle. Jack put his sugar in with a knife which also served to stir. Kon used a square plastic lunchbox as his cornflakes bowl, and so on.



Our departure time was 8:06 with Kon driving the first leg to the next media stop at Tennant Creek. We were not sure how far behind Michigan we were but TIGA was with us all morning and we swapped positions several times. At Tennant Creek Nuna had arrived at 9:45 am so were gone before Michigan arrived at 10:24, Aurora at 10:29 and TIGA at 10:30. We had caught Michigan by just one minute and had covered that first 233 km at an average speed of 97.8 kph. The fifth place car, Formosun III, were a further half hour behind.

The race pace is clearly faster than in 2003 and leaves little time for looking at the sights. One of them is Devil's Marbles, which the famous Aussie photographer Ken Duncan would have renamed as God's Marbles (Tomorrow we expect to see another spectacle as we pass the opal mining town of Coober Pedy).





The next leg was an almighty 502 km from Tennant Creek to Alice Springs. We planned to travel as far as possible on just solar power and we were able to cruise at 100 kph for most of this section. Again we were swapping positions with TIGA for most of the way.



The media stop at Alice Springs had moved to the southern side of the city and Nuna arrived at 3:13, Michigan 4:18, Aurora 4:23, TIGA 4:24. All four cars broke the record speed set by Nuna in the 2003 World Solar Challenge. This is surely a fast race.

Both Michigan and Aurora left the check point in time to also leave Alice Springs where we stopped at 5:05, about 10 km south. This event looks like a new record, with Nuna possibly achieving the 100 kph average speed for the entire 3010 km journey.



The remarkable story of the day was the progress being made by the two cars that had suffered accidents. MIT were in

sixth place at last report with only 2/3 of their solar power available. And the Taiwanese were recovering from their accident and were moving very well in about eighth place. The unofficial runner, the Sunswift car from UNSW, was also making good pace in the field, having passed a number of the regular entries.



We also wonder whether Detleff, the suitcase man, will actually finish the event. After all, in seven events, he's only finished once.

Tomorrow we start with a stretch of 538 km to Cadney with the weather still holding well.
