



RECORDS ECLIPSED – STAGE SET FOR BIGGEST EVER SOLAR CHALLENGE

Adelaide, Australia. Thursday July 6, 2017

Fittingly in its 30th Anniversary year, the field for the 2017 Bridgestone World Solar Challenge, (BWSC), is the largest ever. Record breaking entries and an event program that honours pioneers, high achievers and solar stars past and present, promises an unprecedented Australian adventure on a global stage from the 8-15 October.

South Australia's Minister for Tourism, Leon Bignell, was joined by Bridgestone Corporation's Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, Mr Takashi Tomomoto, BWSC Event Director, Chris Selwood AM, and BWSC Ambassador, Jessica Bloom, at Victoria Square – revealing an historic 50 entries from 26 countries.

'The Bridgestone World Solar Challenge is a fantastic event which not only delivers millions of dollars into our visitor economy but increases awareness around sustainable transport through renewable energy,' Minister Bignell said.

'I'm delighted to meet with Mr Tomomoto – Bridgestone is a terrific sponsor and partner in this event and it's terrific we can mark the 30 year anniversary with a record number of entries.

'The countdown to the 2017 BWSC is officially on and the Dutch can expect a run for their money. It's very impressive to see our leading universities have been working with some of the best in the industry, building their solar-cars using locally developed technologies and incorporating advanced features that have never been seen before,' Minister Bignell said.

Event Director Chris Selwood AM also acknowledged Mr Tomomoto's visit. 'We have moved well beyond Australian shores and Tomomoto san's presence and our valued partnership, is indicative of the standing the BWSC now has internationally,' Chris said.

'We look forward to welcoming so many international competitors to Australia. A global audience of more than 25 million will track their progress across some of our most iconic landscapes, as they follow the path of one of our greatest explorers, John McDouall Stuart, from Adelaide to Darwin on the Explorers Highway. Our 30-year anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate what we've become - the largest solar event in the world.

'From 20 teams in our inaugural 1987 field to 50 entries this year - how we've grown. Close to 10,000 competitors have participated in this incredible event that transcends borders. Our record-breaking 2017 field includes first time countries, international 'top guns' and one of the strongest home-grown contingents, flying the Aussie flag. Three South Australian teams; Flinders University, Adelaide University and TAFE SA, will be joined by ANU in Canberra, Queensland's Clenergy Team Arrow; University of NSW, and Western Sydney University.

'In 30 years we have seen much innovation, wonderful teams, and unfolding stories - I'm sure 2017 will not disappoint. Our Challenger Class will be a battle of the titans, as 31 high-tech, high speed machines, from 21 countries, attempt to outpace Dutch Champions Nuon Solar Team,



who have dominated the Event in all but two Challenges, since 2001. I look forward to seeing who can take it up to the Dutch and what they can do with just four-square metres of solar array.

'Of course, the point of this Challenge is not just to go fast, or to develop technology that will never reach the mainstream. Our founder, Hans Tholstrup, our faculty, and competitors past and present, are all determined to make sustainable, energy positive, solar electric cars and renewable technology a reality. 'This year's Cruiser Class, introduced exclusively to our event in 2013, is about just that. I am absolutely thrilled to announce a field of 16 Cruisers, from 12 countries, will take on our challenge within the Challenge, to deliver a practical, marketable solar electric car.

'So far, team Eindhoven from the Netherlands has further cemented the Dutch dominance, taking back to back Cruiser titles in 2013 and 2015. This year there are 15 other teams hoping to change that. We are expecting even more performance, luxury, and innovation to be on show over the 'rally style' regularity trial and practicality judging. We also have an entry prototype for planned commercialisation, with Clenergy Team Arrow switching to Cruiser for the first time and taking orders for their luxe custom-built solar electric car.

'Our 30th Anniversary program will focus on some of our most inspiring event champions, alumni, and rising stars. Our 'Hall of Fame' will acknowledge the early pioneers and recognise the achievements of competitors who used the event as a platform to innovation. Google co-founder Larry Page, Tesla co-founder and CTO, J B Straubel, Chetan Maini, Vice Chairman of Sun Mobility and founder of Reva Electric Car Company, are past competitors who credit the World Solar Challenge in influencing their careers.

'We are also incredibly fortunate to have the ongoing support of the Aurora Solar Car team and Flinders University. The BWSC education outreach program will feature solar car, Aurora Evolution. It will travel to schools and communities along the route and Flinders University students will assist the team deliver the program.

'Every event year is special, but this one is on track to eclipse past performance,' Chris said.

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2017 Bridgestone World Solar Challenge (8-15 October) Media Background

Celebrating 30 years this year, the world's biggest solar challenge began in 1987 and is a 3,000-kilometre endurance adventure that occurs once every two years. The Bridgestone World Solar Challenge has become the world's foremost innovation challenge with teams from around the world vying to become the first to deliver sustainable solar powered electric vehicles. This year marks the event's 14th crossing of Australia. In 2015, 47 entries from 25 countries were received with 42 teams taking to the start line in Darwin. The event had 1,500 participants and a global audience around 25 million. It generated more than 400 industry partnerships across energy, automotive, engineering, financial, material sciences and ICT sectors.

For event details go to: www.worldsolarchallenge.org

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