

MINI CHALLENGE names the day



Australian motorsport races back to the future on the weekend of March 7-9 when the 2008 MINI CHALLENGE series kicks off at Sydney's famous Eastern Creek International Raceway.

This brand new one-make series will support Australia's premiere motor racing category, V8 Supercars Australia, at eight rounds through 2008, at the very cream of Australia's purpose-built motor racing circuits.

The calendar includes an historic return to the Bathurst 1000 in October, as well as the new endurance event, the Phillip Island 500 km race. To round off its first year, MINI CHALLENGE concludes at Oran Park, helping to mark the circuit's last-ever motorsport meeting before the much-loved venue is redeveloped.

In addition, MINI CHALLENGE is in discussion with the promoters of the Gold Coast Indy 300 with a view to running three sprint races at this international event in the heart of Queensland.

MINI CHALLENGE will be thrilling crowds all across Australia with dates booked as far apart as Barbagello outside Perth and Symmons Plains in rural Tasmania. MINI CHALLENGE will also travel to Wakefield Park near Goulbourn to bring its high-octane magic to the people of rural New South Wales.

The return of a full field of MINIs to Bathurst is more than a nod to nostalgia, as it will give the huge crowd at the event and those watching on TV an excellent opportunity to gauge the race speed of these amazing turbo-charged racecars.

Equipped with the highest output new generation all-alloy 1.6-litre MINI engine yet, the 154kW motor is expected to fling the light-weight flying bricks down Conrod Straight at a very high terminal speed, contributing to very impressive lap times.

And it is sure to be the first time since 1966 that MINIs will fill the first nine places at Bathurst. With a full field finishing there will be more

than 20 MINI CHALLENGE cars tearing across the Start/Finish line.

"We are delighted to be able to confirm the inaugural MINI CHALLENGE series in Australia will support the V8 Supercars at eight meetings in 2008," said Justin Hocevar, National Manager MINI.

"Kicking off the season at Eastern Creek will pitch the drivers straight into the crucible. It is a fantastic racer's circuit, and the cars will put on a terrific racing spectacle for the huge Sydney crowd the event always attracts.

"We wanted to make sure the first event got off to a flying start in front of an enthusiastic motorsport-loving audience. They will be thrilled by the on-track action. That's what they are coming to see," Justin said.

"The return to Bathurst is sure to be emotional especially seeing the cars at speed over the top of the mountain."

MINI CHALLENGE Australia 2008 Calendar

ROUND 1
Eastern Creek NSW
March 7-9

ROUND 2
Wakefield Park NSW
April 4-6

ROUND 3
Barbagello WA
May 9-11

ROUND 4
Sandown VIC
June 7-9

ROUND 5
Phillip Island VIC
September 12-14

ROUND 6
Bathurst NSW
October 9-12

ROUND 7
Symmons Plains TAS
November 21-23

ROUND 8
Oran Park NSW
December 4-7