



Nunas Solar Car driver Toine Urlings looks confident of sizzling down to Adelaide Picture: IVAN RACHMAN

Solar cars ready to shine

JUDITH AISTHORPE

NOT a single futuristic car that will hurtle down the Explorers Highway next week will use a drop of fuel.

Forty-six teams from 25 countries have spent almost two years designing aerodynamic solar powered vehicles to race from Darwin to Adelaide.

If these eco friendly cars pass the scrutineering process over the next two days they will compete in the biannual World Solar Challenge which

begins this weekend. Some of the vehicles are even road-worthy and can be driven around on city streets.

Netherlands competitor for the Cruiser category, Solar Team Eindhoven has created a four-seater family vehicle named Stella Lux.

That category sees teams develop a car that is practical for everyday use and are judged on design as well as mobility.

Team manager Tom Selten said the car was designed to function as a normal car.

"It's a mix between a real car and a solar car and we combined it together in Stella and this is the concept," he said.

Although it may look like a car from the future the team has stopped at nothing to ensure that it has all the mod cons and luxury extras a normal car would have, including cup holders and an interactive console screen.

Scrutineering will continue over the next few days with a time trial on Saturday at Hidden Valley before they begin the race on Sunday.

Live cattle price record 'welcome'

THE roller-coaster ride for Territory cattle producers is continuing with the price for live cattle this week hitting a record high.

The record price of \$3.40/kg is clearly great news for an industry that's endured an unpredictable last four years.

The price for live cattle is almost \$1/kg more than export animals were fetching out of Darwin this time last year.

In early 2014 the industry

was still suffering the after-shocks of the 2011 decision by the then federal Labor government to shut down the live cattle trade with Indonesia after footage emerged showing Australian cattle being brutally treated at Indonesian abattoirs.

Then, with the trade apparently back on track, Indonesia abruptly said in July it was slashing the number of live cattle it would accept by 150,000.

Northern Territory Cattle-

men's Association chief executive Tracey Hayes said news of the record price was "phenomenal". "It's overdue and it's welcome," she said yesterday.

With QLD in drought and the national herd expected to fall from 28.5 million to 26.5 million in the next six months, the challenge now was to continue to meet demand. Internationally, demand is being influenced by the middle class in India and South-East Asia.

Tradies face government drug testing

CRAIG DUNLOP

HUNDREDS of Territory construction workers will face a stricter drug and alcohol testing regimen from Friday.

The changes, due to come into effect nationwide, will affect Commonwealth Government-funded projects including the Palmerston Regional Hospital, the Tiger Brennan Drive duplication and the Parap Pool redevelopment.

The stricter code comes with the in-principle support of the construction union, which backflipped on its workplace drug testing position in March.

CFMEU national construction secretary Dave Noonan said the union now recognises the high-risk nature of the construction industry.

"It's a complex issue, the union has changed our position and we support measures that make the workplace safer," he said.

Mr Noonan said the initiative, which was only announced last month, could catch some smaller employers off guard.

"Many employers are saying to us that they won't be able to meet the demanding

"It's important that people who have a problem are able to front up and seek help"

nature of the testing regimen at such short notice," he said.

He also called for a more comprehensive approach to tackling drugs in the workforce. "It's important that we people are safe in the workplace, but it's also important that people who have a problem are able to front up and seek help," he said.

"If the government is serious about combating the spread of drugs, it's important that they fund rehab programs.

"We've heard cases of tradies who have a problem and want to kick their habit, but haven't been able to get the help they need."

The regimen requires contractors on Commonwealth Government-funded projects to test approximately 10 per cent of employees each month.

The testing will cover can-

nabis, ice and amphetamines, alcohol, opiates and benzodiazepines. Contractors who fail to do so could face sanctions, including being barred from future government work.

But Master Builders NT executive officer Dave Malone said local building companies had anticipated the change, which was "telegraphed" by former Employment Minister Eric Abetz.

Mr Abetz was dumped from cabinet by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who appointed Michaelia Cash to the employment portfolio.

Mr Malone said the drug testing regimen, which will be introduced with a range of other workplace safety measures, could result in some teething issues.

"I suspect that some subbies will be concerned about their ability to retain their workforce when the new regimen kicks in," he said.

"I also expect that we will see lots of teething problems (with the new system). But we do have to get to a point where we are taking adequate steps to protect workers on-site from the risks of working alongside intoxicated people."



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