

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA**

DATE: FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2008

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **National solar challenge for kid-built cars and boats**

Solar-powered model vehicles of every shape and description will be tried and tested at the University of Tasmania's Hobart Campus this weekend.

More than 250 primary and secondary students from around Australia are taking part in the Australian International Model Solar Challenge 2008, which this year is being hosted by the UTAS School of Engineering.

Head of the UTAS School of Engineering, Professor Chris Letchford, said the challenge is a fantastic introduction for young people to a career in engineering.

"At the moment we have two second year UTAS Engineering students who were National Champions in 2005 and 2006 and have taken on the task of organising this year's national event here in Hobart," he said.

Prof. Letchford said that not only is the challenge fun but what the students take out of the experience is fantastic.

The national event brings together all of the Australian state and territory champions.

The challenge is open to primary and secondary students. Working in teams, the participants learn how to design and power a vehicle by the sun, and then race the vehicle to improve the design.

In the high school section students design and build solar powered cars that race in pairs around a figure-eight track of 100m in about 15-25 seconds.

In the boat event, primary school students will use solar power to drive a boat along a string above water.

The Model Solar Challenge is designed to teach the basic concepts of science and engineering, as well as promoting the environmentally-friendly medium of solar power.

The event is attracting around 250-300 primary and secondary students, parents and supervisors to Tasmania.

## **MEDIA OPPORTUNITY**

**What:** The Australian International Model Solar Challenge

**Who:** Primary and secondary student participants and teachers

**When:** Saturday 22- Sunday 23 November

**Where:** University's Rugby Grounds, Sandy Bay Campus, Hobart

**Media opportunities:**

**Saturday 22, 1.30 to 3.30pm, students race their solar powered cars.**

**Sunday 23, 10.30-1pm, students race their solar powered boats.**

**The finals will be held between 1pm and 3pm on Sunday.**

**For more information/interviews, please contact: UTAS Head of Engineering  
Professor Chris Letchford, at 0427 333 215.**

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