



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Finals Fever Hits the AORC at Goondiwindi

The Australian Off Road Championship rolls into Goondiwindi for the final round of the season on October 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. The season to date has taken the offroaders to all corners of the country, from the wheat fields of WA to the red desert sands of Alice Springs, through to the Spencer Gulf at the base of the Flinders Ranges and the tall pine forests of Millicent in South Australia. Now it's Queensland's turn to test man and machine at the season's grand finale, the Albins Goondiwindi 400.

The reigning Australian champions, David Fellows and Mark Bergamin have dominated the 2011 season, winning three out of the four rounds in their twin turbo charged V6 Peter Kittle Motorsport Jimco. However with extra championship points on offer at the final round, Fellows needs to finish sixth place or better to shut the door completely on the #2 Jimco of Dan Auricht and Grant Connelly. Auricht currently trails Fellows by 23 points, but with 30 points on offer for the event win, Auricht could potentially leap frog Fellows if he took victory on the Sunday afternoon. Ensuring an interesting game of cat and mouse plays out over the 400km race as different strategies play out.

While Fellows and Auricht focus on the championship outcome, the race to greet the chequered flag first at the Albins Goondiwindi 400 has never been hotter, with a number of teams heading to Queensland with the goal of an outright win first and foremost. Leading the pack of Proclass buggies will be Sydney's Brad Prout, who is fresh from victories at the Taupo 1000 in New Zealand and the Milbrodale Mountain Classic in his single seater V8 Jimco. Warialda 200 winner Buddy Crowe is also in fine form in the Jimco Champion, as is Terry Rose who went toe to toe with Crowe at his home event just a few weeks ago. After leading the Pines Enduro in September, Matt Hanson will be another driver to watch carefully in his new SMU Racing Jimco. While local hopes will be pinned on Goondiwindi's Joe Bulmer and Mick Napier, who will be drawing on their local knowledge to keep the southerners at bay.

The contenders for the outright win are not limited to the Pro Buggies with South Australia's Brad Gallard bringing the ground pounding Monster Energy V8 Trophy Truck north of the border to tackle the giant melon holes and whoops for which Goondiwindi is famous. Gallard ran second outright in his last appearance at Goondiwindi in 2008 and won't hold back in an attempt to go one place better. While the first man to win the Tattersall's Finke Desert Race in a truck, Greg Gartner will return to Goondiwindi in his V8 F-150 Trophy Truck for the first time since 2004. Currently sitting in third outright on the AORC leaderboard and on top of the Extreme 2WD Class championship, Gartner could potentially finish as high as second outright with a good result at Goondiwindi. But he will need to keep an eye on the mirror as Chris Western will be pushing to close the gap on the Extreme 2WD Class Championship.

The field of over 50 cars will include some exciting class battles. The Prolites have provided some of the most entertaining racing of the season and watching James, Cowie, Watt, Fehlhaber and company go toe to toe will be one of the highlights of the weekend. Zettl, Smith and Melville will lock horns again for the Super 1650 honours, while Ballantine looks set to have it all his own way in the Sportsman Class. The Performance 2WD honours will be played out between the two Victorian teams of Weaire and Osinski.

With a huge lead in the Production 4WD Class, Geoff Pickering will focus on reclaiming the coveted #701 number relinquished to Clayton Chapman in 2010. While the Extreme 4WD Class championship will go right down to the wire with Western Australia's Russell Cullen heading to Goondiwindi with a healthy, but not insurmountable 712 point lead over seven time Extreme 4WD Champion, Colin Hunter. Clayton Chapman will be another to watch, after showing blistering speed in his Mitsubishi Pajero throughout the season.

The Albins Goondiwindi 400 will launch on Friday night at the Goondiwindi Showgrounds from 4pm, with scrutineering and a show and shine until 8pm. Held in a festival atmosphere, it will be a great opportunity to meet the drivers and grab an autograph before they hit the dirt. Racing commences on Saturday morning 20 km from Goondiwindi at Lofty's Lair just off the Cunningham Hwy. The venue provides an unrivalled perspective of Malypunyah Run, one of the most exciting pieces of offroad racetrack on the planet. With live commentary and refreshments on sale, spectators will be able to sit back and watch the race for the championship unfold.

The green flag will drop at 10am on Saturday morning for the prologue and top ten shoot out which will get the blood pumping before the big desert racers stretch their legs that afternoon with two laps of the long course. Racing kicks off again at 8am on Sunday morning, which will see the race cars tackle another 3 laps of the 80km course. At the conclusion of which, the 2011 Australian Champion will be crowned.

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