



MEDIA RELEASE

RECORD INTEREST AS TATTS FINKE DESERT RACE UNVEILS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM

Over 1200 competitors vie for spots in Australia's toughest off-road race as historic 50th celebration takes shape.

The Tatts Finke Desert Race has shattered all previous records with more than 1200 competitors expressing interest in the 2026 event, marking the highest demand in the race's storied 50-year history.

The unprecedented interest comes as organisers today released the full program for next year's milestone anniversary, featuring a week-long celebration that honours both the original 56 pioneers from 1976 and the evolution of Australia's most gruelling off-road motorsport event.

"We're witnessing something truly special," said Finke Desert Race President Antony Yoffa. "The response has been absolutely phenomenal – we're looking at nearly 20 times the number of competitors from that first race in 1976."

HISTORIC REUNION IN THE MAKING

In a race against time, organisers have been tracking down surviving members of the original 1976 field across Australia and overseas, with many already confirmed to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations.

"I've had fascinating conversations with these pioneering riders who are scattered around the globe," Yoffa said. "Their stories from 50 years ago paint an incredible picture of how the sport and the event have evolved. These are the legends who started it all."

All previous race winners in both car and motorcycle categories will also receive special invitations to be part of the anniversary celebrations.

NEW PARTNERSHIP BRINGS FRESH ENERGY

The event has secured a significant new partnership with AJP Motos Australia, which will sponsor the Scrutineering, one of the event's most popular spectator activities across the weekend.

The Portuguese predominantly hand-built motorcycle brand has been in Australia since 2012 and are distributed through AJP Motos Australia. The brand brings impressive motorsport credentials to Finke, having built a reputation for lightweight, high-performance motorcycles since seven-time Portuguese Enduro Champion António Pinto and his brother Jose established the business from a small repair shop in 1987. AJP Motos has since evolved into an innovative manufacturer with racing

success across Europe and cutting-edge four-stroke technology that has earned international recognition.

"We are absolutely thrilled to joining the Finke and AJP families through this partnership for the first time," said AJP Motos Australia representative Glenn McHugh. "This partnership represents a perfect alignment – AJP's heritage of building and racing motorcycles that excel in demanding conditions – meets Australia's most demanding off-road challenge. This is more than sponsorship – it's about being part of an iconic piece of Australian motorsport history. We can't wait to experience the incredible atmosphere firsthand and contribute to what promises to be an unforgettable 50th anniversary."

The partnership brings added entertainment and activities during the traditionally intense scrutineering period, while showcasing AJP's commitment to supporting grassroots motorsport and enhancing the overall competitor and spectator experience.

UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND SHAPES ENTRY PLANNING

With interest far exceeding available spots, organisers are working closely with Motorsport Australia and Motorcycling Australia to determine final entry limits that balance competitor demand with safety requirements and logistical capabilities.

The surge in applications reflects not only the milestone anniversary but also growing national interest in off-road motorsport, with significant interstate visitor numbers expected to boost Alice Springs' economy during the event week.

FULL WEEK OF CELEBRATIONS PLANNED

2026 Golden Anniversary Program:

- **Wednesday 3rd June:** 50th Finke Celebration Dinner
- **Thursday 4th June:** Finke Street Party and Night Markets
- **Friday 5th June:** AJP Motos Australia Scrutineering Day
- **Saturday 6th June:** Method Race Wheels Prologue
- **Sunday 7th June:** Race Day 1
- **Monday 8th June:** Race Day 2 & Presentation Night

The extended program reflects the event's growth from a single day in 1976 to a week-long celebration that has become central Australia's premier motorsport spectacle.

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About the Tatts Finke Desert Race: First held in 1976 with 56 motorcycle competitors, the Tatts Finke Desert Race has grown to become Australia's premier off-road motorsport event, attracting hundreds of competitors across bike, buggies, trophy trucks and side-by-sides and thousands of spectators annually to Alice Springs

for the 450-kilometre return journey through some of the country's most challenging desert terrain.

Thursday 21st August 2025