

REPCO RELIABILITY TRIAL AUG 79

This aerial shot shows dramatically the "loneliness of the long-distance Trial driver".

**The ultimate test
of crews, cars
and components.
Learn as much
as you can about
the Repco
Reliability Trial...
the toughest trial
in this country since
the early trials
of the fifties.**

REPCO RELIABILITY TRIAL AUG 79

Facts and Figures.

When and Where

The Repco Trial will start in Melbourne on August 5, 1979 and will run clockwise around Australia for 20,000 kms in 14 days. It will finish back in Melbourne on August 19th.

Organisation

The Trial will be organised by Australian Sporting Promotions, a company in Adelaide run by six-times South Australian champion, Stewart McLeod. This will be an International Event held under the International Sporting Code of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (F.I.A.) and the National Competition Rules of the Confederation of Australian Motor Sports (CAMS).

Throughout the whole of the Trial route, no competitive sections are located in or near national parks.

Prizemoney

A total of A\$50,000 prize money is offered. The outright winner will receive at least \$14,000 and prize money is extended to 10th place.

Class awards will be worth at least \$7,000 and Special Stage Awards will be a minimum of \$10,000.

Cars eligible

Cars eligible to enter the Repco Reliability Trial will be two wheel drive vehicles registered for use on public roads in Australia. Modification to vehicles is unrestricted.

Classes

Car classes will be: Up to 1600cc; 1601 to 2000cc; 2001 to 3000cc; and over 3000cc.

Entries

Entries will be restricted to approximately 200 competitors. The first 150 entries received will be guaranteed a start. The remainder will be conditional entries subject to ballot. Entries close on 30th June, 1979.

Applications should be made to: Australian Sporting Promotions, 524 Magill Road, Magill, 5072, South Australia
Telephone (08) 31 6601
Telex AA88811



Trial Organiser, STEWART McLEOD has no trouble in some sand in Western Australia during his recent survey for the REPCO RELIABILITY TRIAL. This section will prove easy for all experienced competitors.

The route.

From the start, the Repco Trial will set a lively pace. From Melbourne, cars will proceed to central Victoria on Sunday afternoon 5th August. Along fire track roads in closed circuit, they will immediately compete in familiar rally territory. From the start too, the Trial will include many Special Stage events closed to ordinary traffic. Spectator venues have been organised to allow the public to view as much of the fun as possible. Spectator Programmes will be made available through all Repco outlets so that you can go direct to the safest spectator venue points. After the cars leave Melbourne they will proceed around Heathcote and Bendigo. Competitors will head down into the hill country between Maryborough and Ararat to the sea at Mt. Gambier. The first cars are expected to arrive here at around 9.40 on Sunday night.

But there will be only a short rest break in Mt. Gambier before proceeding through numerous very low sandridges to the North. Cars will wind their way overnight to Renmark, South Australia, where they will arrive as the sun is rising. Then it's on

From a tough, tight, rocky "jump-ups" in the Flinders Ranges, cars will pound their way into Broken Hill in the afternoon. Their next destination a rugged ride to — of all places — Birdsville! This will require expert navigation during the night sections and careful driving to reach this outpost.

In this section, when cars depart from Broken Hill, they will head north through the Barrier Range in the afternoon and cross numerous creeks around Shannon and will pass around the outskirts of Tiobourra. This place has a famous pub, by the way, especially renowned for its decor. However, crews won't get a chance to admire it.

To the west and to the north of Tiobourra the country flattens out into plains as far as the eye can see. Cars will be on narrow tracks, and the whole environment of the area makes you think back to the tremendous problems the Burke and Wills expedition must have had, in the last century.

As they cross back into South Australia near "Cordillo Downs" the cars will be negotiating tracks into the early hours of the morning. There are plenty of creek crossings, and other hazards to watch out for here. Navigators will need to be on the ball finding their way into Queensland.

The February issue of "National Geographic" can show you vivid colour pictures of this country and the problems people have in living in this remote centre.

And, remember, apart from rough terrain and flooded waterways this area is generally unpredictable. In fact, if conditions change rapidly, alternative routes may have to be taken in this area. That's what it's like going into Birdsville. You could call it a "hard day's night"!

From Birdsville to Maree will be a slight relief. But don't imagine that the sandy tracks of the Simpson Desert are a Sunday drive. The first cars are scheduled to arrive at Maree at 9.30 am on Wednesday 8th but crews will immediately head South, past Margaret Creek and south of Lake Eyre. Cars will now encounter claypan country, rock hill outcrops and other "uncomfortable" road conditions. These will persist until they reach the central

down to the Southern Lofty Ranges outside Adelaide. More competition near Kersbrook with cars finally entering the city at around 4 p.m. on Monday 6th — for a well-earned rest.

That leg of the Trial will have been a "warm up" for the tough tracks ahead. In fact, from Adelaide after an overnight rest, there will be one of the longest, hardest drives ever devised in Australian rallying. Even the best crews are expected to find difficulties in this section! Every driver will be driving his car with the final Perth destination in mind. Therefore he will drive with precision on this rough circuit to preserve his car over this incredible distance.



The road stretches as far as the eye can see. On the Nullarbor Plain, drivers will need to keep their eyes peeled because this track can become covered with nasty protruding rocks!

Nullarbor Plain. They arrive at Eucia on Wednesday night and will continue on to Kalgoorlie arriving in the early morning of Thursday 9th. This overnight section will include another "horror stretch" with sandhills, salt patches, claypans and tracks that will be barely noticeable at night! A navigator's nightmare! So the crew will need to be careful and plan their course well.

The trip into Perth will pass the large Lake King, Lake Grace and through the wheat belt near Narrogin into Perth.

Actually, cars will arrive at Gloucester Park, Perth, late Thursday night 9th August. Here cars will be impounded. The crews, meanwhile, will be taking a well-earned 14 hour rest break. A competitive stage will be held close to the city on the following day.

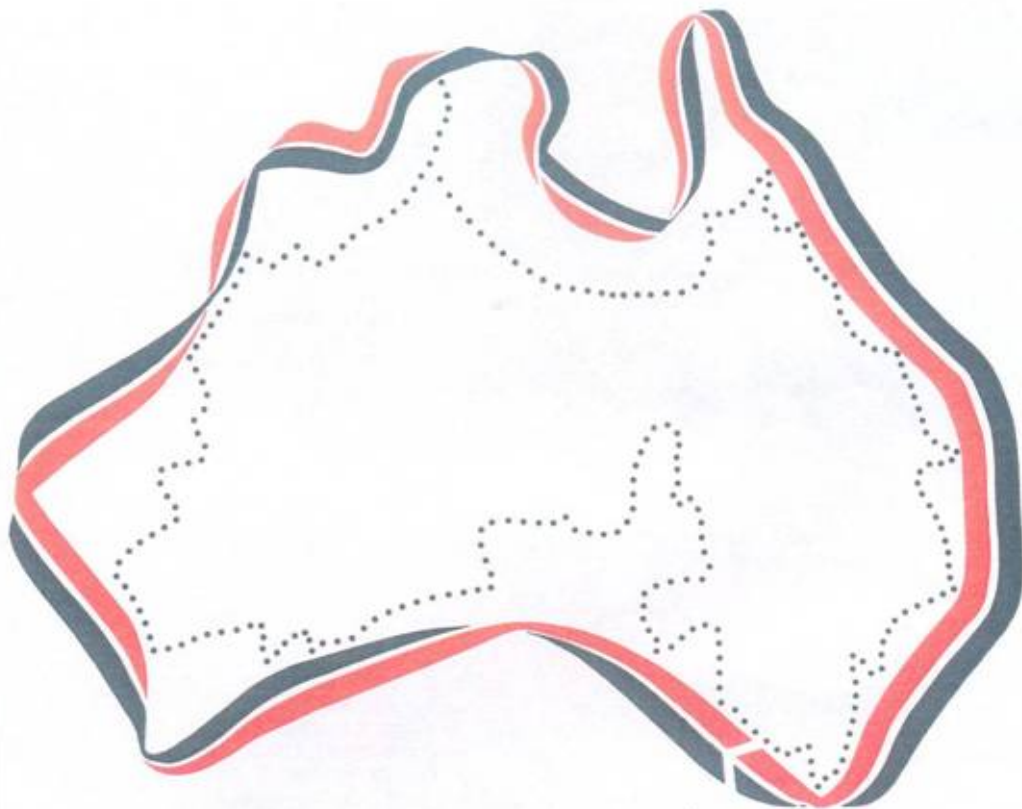
Then begins the trek to the North. Traveling up the coast to Geraldton, and skirting the coastal areas — cars will travel past huge sand dunes. They enter the kingdom of Prince Leonard of Hutt at the Hutt River Province and they may have passport trouble too! Crews will see miles and miles of rabbit proof fencing as they travel north east.

Then into the mining areas over hard iron terrain around the huge mountains of the Hammersley Range. It's on to Port Hedland where the first car is expected to arrive at around 10.45 am on Saturday 11th. This, incidentally, will be after an all-night drive through the Hammersleys. But there will be no time for "Saturday Night Fever". After a short rest break, the cars will take in the Indian Ocean road along telegraph line tracks with numerous "yumps" to Broome, Derby and Wyndham to Kununurra.

It's already been a tiring journey and, surprise, surprise, there are still 6 more days to go! Competitors are now on the final leg of a 4700 kms drive from Perth to Darwin where they are expected in the late afternoon of Sunday 12th August. A stretch like that deserves another 14½ hours rest break — which will be gratefully taken by all crews. But at 7 am next morning, it's "wakey, wakey, rise and shine" and off to Katherine which the first cars will reach by noon.

Incidentally, it's time we talked about refuelling! Cars don't run on fresh air — especially some finely tuned beauties that have entered for the "Repco".

The Trial route has been selected to provide fuel availability at appropriate intervals. Actually, the maximum distances between planned fuel stops vary up to 800 kms. Each vehicle is expected to be equipped with a fuel tank capacity of at least 550 competitive kilometres. The longest competitive stage is



Fools may rush in — but Angels will reduce their speed to a crawl. These claypan flats along the way will slow the entire field but it is time that will need to be made up elsewhere along the Trial route.

520 kms which is preceded by a 200 kms touring stage during which tanks could be topped up from cans.

Many people in the outback are also involved with the Repco Trial. They will be going to a good deal of trouble to assist the competitors ensuring that fuel and, in some cases, food are provided for the competing cars. Many of the outback people still remember the early Trials.

Many service stations will also act as checkpoints and refuelling depots along the way. Repco is very grateful for the hundreds of outback people who will be involving themselves in this classic event.

On the subject of "Stages". The Trial will contain approximately 140 stages comprising 20 Special Stages, 65 Trial Stages, 45 Touring Stages and 10 Assembly Stages. The total length of Special Stages and Trial Stages will be approximately 13,000 of the total 20,000 kilometres.

The Queensland section of the Trial will probably hold more surprises for cars and crews. After an early morning rest at Burketown cars depart for an early breakfast at Mt. Isa. A further rest break is very necessary because of the incredible distance from this mining centre to Cairns on the coast. A solid drive for one day. (And when you compare the distances between any habitation this section is really lengthy.)

Cars leave The Isa at 8.00 am on Tuesday 14th August reaching Cairns after 10 pm at night. The journey down the coast, around winding jungle tracks, up, down, around hills will take place over Tuesday (14th) night until cars reach Townsville for a 10 hour rest.

Mackay, Rockhampton (arriving early morning on Thursday 16th), Maryborough, through to Brisbane will all be completed on Thursday 16th.

Clockwise around Australia. 20,000 km in 14 days. For over 200 entries reliability will be the keyword.

Cars will always use tracks well away from built up areas, and venue points can be sought from the Spectator Programme, which will be issued through Repco outlets at the time the Trial is on.

Arrival of first cars at Brisbane is scheduled at 4.25 pm on Thursday 16th, where crews stop for a short rest.

The route to Sydney and Melbourne travels through Grafton area from 11 pm Thursday 16th to the Port Macquarie area, arriving at Newcastle at 8.30 am on Friday 17th August.

In Sydney cars will proceed to the Motor Show at the Showgrounds near Centennial Park, from 11.20 am onwards for an overnight stay.

First cars leave Sydney at 9.00 pm on Friday 17th for an overnight drive to Albury via the way of Canberra. Cars will complete their competitive sections in Albury at 2 pm on Saturday 18th August, returning to the finish at Melbourne. (More details of the complete Trial will be available in a further Bulletin after a survey of the route is completed in April. This survey will be carried out in another four-wheel drive to check all of the route before the final survey in a two-wheel drive car just before the Trial commences.)



Australian Sporting Promotions is the organising company for the Repco Trial. Here director and ex-rally champion Stewart McLeod takes a roadside snack while planning the course.

What do trials achieve?

Australia is a great country for Motoring Trials of all types. And, in fact, the broadness of appeal of a trial of this nature is quite remarkable. Firstly, it offers a wide range of experience for competitors. Nobody disputes that. But spectators, too, gain a great deal of knowledge and excitement from watching the event. There is a mysterious camaraderie in sharing in the loneliness of the long-distance driver making his way into areas which the city-dweller may never actually visit. It gives him a sense of belonging to that remote spot. You realise just how large this country is, and how competent drivers must be to negotiate the terrain in this type of event.

As the Repco Reliability Trial travels around the country and to each Capital city, it will also take in many larger provincial towns, outback mining centres, remote outback districts and far-distant cattle stations. As the Trial cars pass by, each of these centres will also stand in the media spotlight.

But, naturally, watching cars perform is only half the story. The Trial is valuable for manufacturers and automotive engineers to check the durability of motor car components. Long distances, heat, dust and bad road conditions, all will test motor parts to the limit. Few cars would ever need to endure such conditions in their lifetime... but manufacturers place their vehicles in these trials in the public spotlight, knowing that the conditions are severe. This shows courage in the marketplace. In automotive design few faults ever remain in components for very long — if they exist they are quickly rectified. Private entry teams also understand their particular cars — and the strengths needed to take such an unmerciful pounding over a 20,000 kilometre course. This Trial is

valuable to manufacturers and private entries as well.

If crews are forced to perform "bush engineering" tasks with a pair of pliers and a roll of No. 8 wire, then valuable time will be lost. It's times like these you not only need a certain mint-tasting sweet, but you get some bright ideas how bodies can be strengthened to withstand the incredible forces of tough outback driving.

That briefly, is what tough

A rugged test for suspension, tyres and the bodywork of Trial cars. This section with its harsh surface and many curves and dips will make the going slow across the Plains.

Trials are all about. It is no disgrace for a car, or crew, not to complete the course. It needs very skilful hours at the wheel. Total concentration. And spot-on navigation. Today, many will argue that a great deal of fun has gone out of motoring. True. **But it's lively worthwhile events like the Repco Reliability Trial that help drivers handle cars well and safely in extreme conditions.**

Of course, some crews will arrive home dispirited and disappointed. Others will arrive tired, but tested, after a great adventure. Still others will be feeling triumphant and terrific! But all will gain a great sense of achievement at having participated in one of the toughest tests of men and machines ever organised in Australia.

This Trial will also be the biggest, most spectacular all-Repco promotion for many years. It is one which is sure to attract both world-wide publicity as well as receiving wide coverage throughout the Australia media, because some of the old "Redex" Trial personalities may enter. Even now it is known that the original 'Grey Ghost' Ford will enter the Trial.

This exciting Repco event promises to be the true motoring highlight of 1979.

Feature film with ABC television

Arrangements have been made with ABC TV to film the Repco Reliability Trial. This film will be placed throughout the network of 164 ABC stations in Australia giving the event the chance to be viewed nationally.

The opportunity for everyone to see the highlights of the Trial nationally, will draw a lot of attention to Repco.

