

## **Last Chance for a Round Australia adventure!**

Time is running out for long distance rally enthusiasts and adventurers to be part of what is likely to be the last real Round Australia-type trial experience.

Former Australian rally champ and organiser of the 1995 Mobil 1 Round Australia Trial Bob Watson has set a deadline of the end of July this year to receive serious expressions of interest in the Outback event he has been planning to run in September 2008.

Starting in Alice Springs and finishing at Australia's round of the World Rally Championship– Rally Australia – on the Queensland Gold Coast, the event has been designed as a true adventure in the 55-year tradition of classic trials.

However a special highlight, not available to pioneering Round Australia drivers like 'Gelignite' Jack Murray , Ken Tubman and Eddie Perkins, is the possibility that the Round Australia cars may compete in front of the public in the Rally Australia Super Stage, as well as over some of the Special Stages used by the WRC cars on the Saturday of Rally Australia.

"The huge crowds we expect to watch Rally Australia will enjoy seeing the old cars as a prelude to watching the world's best" said Rally Australia organising chairman Garry Connelly, whose committee has been very supportive of the Round Australia trial's role in promoting the WRC round to a diverse national audience.

However his and Watson's plans may remain dreams unless sufficient entrants are prepared to commit to the event by the end of July.

"At present we have around 50 entrants who are prepared to pay a deposit to secure a start," said Watson, "but with the cost of organising the event exceeding \$500,000 we need to see around 70 confirmed entries to proceed".

In contrast to Rally Australia which features the world's best and fastest rally cars, the Round Australia event will be limited to Historic, Classic and Production rally cars conforming with CAMS regulations, with an age cut-off no more recent than the end of 1985.

"We will respect the age of the competing cars and choose the roads accordingly" says Watson. "We want every car to reach the finish and enjoy the experience and adventure of a classic Round Australia type event"

The trial from Alice Springs will be run over minor outback roads and farm tracks, with sections as long as 100km. A special feature will be an overnight stop where the entire field will camp out, experiencing the conditions that made the early Round Australia trials such an adventure.

Interested parties should contact **Bob Watson** on **(03) 9646 1066**, or email [\*\*bobwatso@bigpond.net.au\*\*](mailto:bobwatso@bigpond.net.au)