



**Communications Motorsport**

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## **Season opener for title defender Audi in Australia**

- **Intercontinental GT Challenge: 2017 season kicks off at Bathurst**
- **12-hour race at legendary Mount Panorama with seven Audi R8 LMS cars**
- **Live streaming provided by the organizer at [www.bathurst12hour.com.au](http://www.bathurst12hour.com.au)**

**Ingolstadt, January 30, 2017 – Audi is traveling to Down Under as the title defender. Following its win of the drivers' and manufacturers' classifications in the 2016 Intercontinental GT Challenge, the racing series' second season will kick off at Bathurst, Australia, on Sunday, February 5. Audi's teams will be meeting with fierce competition at the event.**

Ten automobile manufacturers are on the grid in the GT3 category, including eight marques in the Pro Class for professional drivers, who have the best chances of claiming overall victory. "It's going to be a strong opening event," says Chris Reinke, Head of Audi Sport customer racing. "Audi is one of the best established brands in GT racing in Australia. Together with our customers, we intend to battle for overall victory and other successes at Bathurst again this year."

The facility 200 kilometers west of Sydney enjoys a worldwide reputation of being one of the great natural race tracks. On a distance of only 6.2 kilometers, the circuit at Mount Panorama features a vertical difference of 174 meters between its highest and lowest points. Bold combinations of turns make for a fluid rhythm at high speed, while the concrete barriers close to the edge of the track do not forgive the slightest driving mistake. 56 cars in total will be sharing the track.

Since 2011, the 12-hour race has been open to GT race cars as well. Audi, as a brand having competed in the event from the very beginning, clinched overall victory in 2011 and 2012, and since then has been the only manufacturer to have triumphed twice. This year, seven Audi R8 LMS cars will be on the grid. Team Jamec Pem Racing, supported by Audi Sport customer racing, competes in the Pro Class with two strong driver squads: Christopher Mies, a two-time winner at Mount Panorama, is sharing a cockpit with his German compatriot Christopher Haase and the Australian ace Garth Tander, who has won the legendary Bathurst 1000 touring car race an amazing three times. The sister car will be driven by the two Germans Frank Stippler and Markus Winkelhock together with Robin Frijns. The Dutchman has previously won a championship title in the Audi R8 LMS. Winkelhock and Stippler have celebrated success in various 24-hour races under the banner of the four rings.



Five teams with drivers from Australia and New Zealand complete the lineup of the four rings. They include Greg Taylor and Nathan Antunes from Team GT Motorsport. Last year, the two Australians together with another contender clinched victory in the amateur class at Bathurst when the new Audi R8 LMS debuted in Australia.

For the first time, the regular qualifying session will be followed by a shootout for the top ten grid positions. This competition, as well as the full race on Sunday, will be broadcast live by the local television channel 7mate. Around the globe, viewers can watch live streaming of the race provided by the organizer at [www.bathurst12hour.com.au](http://www.bathurst12hour.com.au). Following the opener in Australia, there are three other rounds scheduled on the Intercontinental GT Challenge calendar, at Spa/Belgium (July 29–30), Laguna Seca/USA (October 14–15) and Sepang/Malaysia (December 9–10).

#### **Audi teams at Bathurst**

- #2 Audi R8 LMS ultra (DJS Racing), GT3 AM  
James Bergmüller/Samuel Fillmore/Daniel Stutterd (AUS/NZ/AUS)
- #3 Audi R8 LMS (Team ASR), GT3 Pro-AM  
Daniel Gaunt/Matt Halliday/Ash Samadi (NZ/NZ/AUS)
- #5 Audi R8 LMS (GT Motorsport), GT3 AM  
Nathan Antunes/Elliot Barbour/Greg Taylor (AUS/AUS/AUS)
- #9 Audi R8 LMS (Hallmarc), GT3 Pro-AM  
Marc Cini/Dean Fiore/Lee Holdsworth (AUS/AUS/AUS)
- #45 Audi R8 LMS (Supabarn), GT3 AM  
Simon Evans/James Koundouris/Theo Koundouris/Marcus Marshall (NZ/AUS/AUS/AUS)
- #74 Audi R8 LMS (Jamec Pem Racing), GT3 Pro  
Christopher Haase/Christopher Mies/Garth Tander (D/D/AUS)
- #75 Audi R8 LMS (Jamec Pem Racing), GT3 Pro  
Robin Frijns/Frank Stippler/Markus Winkelhock (NL/D/D)

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The Audi Group, with its brands Audi, Ducati and Lamborghini, is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium segment. It is present in more than 100 markets worldwide and produces at 16 locations in twelve countries. 100-percent subsidiaries of AUDI AG include quattro GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy).

In 2015, the Audi Group delivered to customers approximately 1.8 million automobiles of the Audi brand, 3,245 sports cars of the Lamborghini brand and about 54,800 motorcycles of the Ducati brand. In the 2015 financial year, AUDI AG achieved total revenue of €58.4 billion and an operating profit of €4.8 billion. At present, approximately 85,000 people work for the company all over the world, about 60,000 of them in Germany. Audi focuses on new products and sustainable technologies for the future of mobility.