



**Communications Motorsport**

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## **Audi customers to compete for three titles in Australian GT racing**

- **Privateer Audi teams on the grid in three national racing series**
- **Five drivers have previously won titles with Audi**
- **Audi R8 LMS ranks among the most popular race cars on the fifth continent**

**Ingolstadt, March 1, 2017 – Australia has been one of the most successful markets in Audi Sport’s customer racing program for years. In 2017, the teams are again contesting three different national championships there. The season opens on Thursday, March 2 with race one of the Australian GT Championship at Adelaide.**

Three Australian racing series and a single aim: Audi’s customers intend to be title candidates again this year. In 2011 and 2015, the overall classifications in the Australian GT Championship went to Audi campaigners. This year, up to seven Audi R8 LMS cars will be battling for overall victory. Between March and September, the race calendar lists five events, the second race weekend on March 23 being regarded as the season’s pinnacle event. That is when the Australian GT Championship will be held as part of the supporting program of the Formula 1 Grand Prix at Melbourne.

The Australian Endurance Championship is another attractive series. Between May and November, it will feature four races – two in Australia, plus two in New Zealand. Currently, four customer racing teams are planning to compete in the Audi R8 LMS.

The GT Trophy is the third Australian racing series with entry opportunities available to privateer teams. The regulations exclusively permit older-specification racing cars such as the first generation of the Audi R8 LMS. Up to eight Audi drivers will be on the grid this season, battling for the fourth consecutive title for an Audi driver in this classification. In 2014, Rod Salmon won the classification, followed by Greg Taylor in 2015 and Rob Smith in 2016. These three Australian title winners have remained loyal to Audi this year.

They are not the only title winners sporting the banner of the four rings. The South African Kelvin van der Linde in 2014 won the ADAC GT Masters in Germany in an Audi and is now looking forward to his first season in Australia. Steven McLaughlan is another Audi driver with a championship title under his belt. Last year, he won a regional Australian racing series in the state of Victoria in an Audi R8 LMS.



Most of the Audi campaigners in the three Australian GT racing series are relying on the Melbourne Performance Centre (MPC) as their race team again this year. MPC is the official contractual partner of Audi Sport's customer racing program in the Pacific region. "We are delighted to see Australia continuing to be one of our strongest markets this year," says Chris Reinke, Head of Audi Sport customer racing. "We wish our drivers, teams and customers a lot of success in this fierce competition."

### **The Audi teams in the Australian GT Championship**

- #3 Ash Samadi
- #5 Greg Taylor/Nathan Antunes
- #9 Marc Cini
- #24 Daniel Gaunt/Gary Higgon
- #44 James Koundouris/Ash Walsh
- #74 Geoff Emery/Kelvin van der Linde
- #75 Steven McLaughlan

### **The Audi teams in the Australian Endurance Championship**

- #3 Ash Samadi
- #5 Greg Taylor/Nathan Antunes
- #44 James Koundouris/Ash Walsh
- #74 Geoff Emery/Kelvin van der Linde

### **The Audi teams in the Australian GT Trophy**

- #1 Rob Smith
- #6 Rod Salmon
- #17 Travers Beynon
- #22 Rick Mensa
- #25 Ryan How
- #72 Con Whitlock
- #75 Steven McLaughlan
- #88 Rio Nugara

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 Audi Sport GmbH (Neckarsulm), Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. (Sant'Agata Bolognese, Italy) and Ducati Motor Holding S.p.A. (Bologna, Italy).

In 2016, the Audi Group delivered to customers about 1.871 million automobiles of the Audi brand, 3,457 sports cars of the Lamborghini brand and 55,451 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 88,000 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.