

MEDIA RELEASE

Hotham set for alpine hillclimb and tarmac rally in 2015

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA – This November Mount Hotham and the surrounding Alpine & Gippsland Shires in North Eastern Victoria will host two brand new motorsport events: The world's longest hillclimb and Australia's first all-new major tarmac rally in five years.

Motorsport promoter Auto Corsa Group has worked with the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort Management Board to stage the events that will run concurrently over the weekend of 13-15 November 2015.

Auto Corsa Group Co-director, Stuart Benson, said the 29km Alpine Cup International Hillclimb would significantly outdistance the famed Pikes Peak event in the US, which at 19km is currently the world's longest.

"We wanted to offer something really special," said the former Targa Tasmania designer and event director. "Provide an experience that would be a true test of man and machine like no other."

The 241-corner tarmac trek has an elevation gain of around 1300 metres finishing at the summit of Mount Hotham, 1837 metres above sea level. Each driver will contest the course six times over the two days, totalling 171 competitive kilometres.

Mr Benson said the event had already received a high level of interest from a number of international competitors and local manufacturers.

An 11-stage tarmac rally comprising 250 competitive kilometres, will be held over the same weekend based at Mount Hotham taking in Falls Creek and closed roads around nearby towns including Harrietteville, Mount Beauty and Omeo.

The Hotham Auto Corsa Alpine Tarmac Rally is expected to attract a field of some 200 cars with multiple Australian Rally Champion Simon Evans already signed on for the challenge.

"The roads of Hotham are one of Australia's best kept secrets," said Evans. "These events will include some of the most technical and challenging tarmac roads I've ever driven over and the scenery is just incredible."

Both events also will take in a stretch of the 300km Great Alpine Road, Australia's highest sealed through-road between Wangaratta and Bairnsdale. Newly appointed Mt Hotham CEO, Jonathan Hutchins claims the event will highlight the Great Alpine Road as a year round touring destination. "The natural vistas and sealed condition of the Great Alpine Road give it the potential to rival and even surpass Victoria's other iconic travel route the Great Ocean Road. As a year round destination the North East of Victoria offers excitement and natural attractions for both domestic and international visitors."

Chair of the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort Management Board, Deborah Spring, said motorsport was a great fit for Hotham – a destination that attracts more than 122,000 adrenalin-seeking skiers each year. Mt Hotham is one of only three Ski Resorts in the world that is built the top of the mountain and provides a very unique atmosphere for showcasing this style of event.

"As much as our visitors enjoying skiing Hotham's challenging slopes, the competitors of these events will love driving our roads.

"Importantly, there will also be some fantastic spots along each course for spectators to get close to the action."

Ms Spring said the events would stimulate economic growth to the region to the tune of 5,000 additional bed stays during the green season.

"This is an exciting opportunity for our community to really take ownership of these events, which I am told are a much-welcomed addition to the Australian motor sport calendar."

This is the first time the Great Alpine Road, considered by many as one of the best driving roads in the southern hemisphere, has been closed specifically for an event of this type.

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