



MEDIA RELEASE

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**AUSTRALIAN OFFSHORE POWERBOAT SERIES**  
**GEARING UP FOR THRILLING 2007**

The Australian Offshore Powerboat Series is set to blast its way into Geelong on 17 & 18 February for the opening round of the 2007 Australian Series.

With a host of new teams, a brand new category, and some added rules to make competition tight and even, the 2007 series is looking to dish up some fiery encounters out on the water.

Last year saw the emergence of young gun Luke Durman for the SIMRAD team and under the guidance of an experienced Maritimo line-up, Durman was able to take out the Australian Class- 1 crown in his rookie year with team mate Ross Willaton.

Tom Barry-Cotter also debuted in 2006 alongside father and offshore racing legend Bill Barry-Cotter, and with a season under their belt the father-son duo is set for a big '07 in a bid for Bill to claim back the AUS1 title.

While SIMRAD and Maritimo enjoyed success in 2006, the same can't be said for ACME Racing and the Smorgon Steel team, with luck not on either teams side and engine failures playing havoc on their 2006 campaigns.

However both are back for another shot at the 2007 series with brothers Steve and Andrew Searle saddling up for ACME, and a new set of faces ready to take up the challenge in the Smorgon boat after the retirement of Tony Low at the completion of 2006.

Last years rookie of the year Mat Humphrey will steer for Smorgon while Steve Jellick, formerly of Maritimo to take up a seat in the cockpit as throttleman.

"Steve Jellick is a very accomplished racer so we are very lucky to have him on board to talk Mat through each race", said Smorgon Team Owner Tony Low.

The Class Three- 6 litre category is up for grabs in 2007, with three brand new teams to lock horns, while current champion Red Bellies is in New Zealand battling it out with the Kiwi's.

A highly competitive field has been compiled for the Class Three- 4 litre title, with the field growing to five teams this season.

Though the Hogs Breath team have made the four litre crown there own in recent years with four straight title's, the Ezy Does It crew broke through their maiden win in the final round of 2006 proving that Hogs Breath aren't invincible.



“We’ve worked hard on making some changes to our boat in the off-season, just to make sure we stay ahead of the pack,” said Paul Gibbs of Hogs Breath.

“Some changes to the bottom of the hull should give us some better handling and more speed, which we will definitely need this year with the field almost doubling”.

Geelong will host the opening round next weekend, and the teams are full anticipation and looking forward to the season opener.

“It’s been a long off season and the guys can’t wait to head to Geelong, we get some brilliant support from the public down there who really get behind us on race day”, said Race Director Russell Embleton.

“It’s fitting that the opening round be held in Geelong because we get great crowds and it’s great to have that support on race day”.

Best viewing points for spectators will be in areas along the foreshore near Steampacket Gardens and Cunningham Pier.

**Saturday 17 February**

Practice and Testing

When: 3:30pm- 4:30pm

Where: Corio Bay

**Sunday 18 February**

Geelong Classic Offshore Powerboat Race

When: Midday- 1:30pm

Where: Corio Bay