

MEDIA RELEASE

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'Formula One on water' hits Melbourne

The Offshore Superboat Championships – Australia's 'Formula One on water' – is set to wow Melbourne crowds during February, at stops three and four of the 2008 series. Both events (9-10 and 16-17 February) are free to spectators.

With the purpose-built Class One powerboats capable of speeds in excess of 220km/h, the spectacle of these racing machines ripping around the Port Phillip Bay course can only be described as awe-inspiring.

Other championship classes competing in Melbourne include the Supercat Outboard, Supercat Outboard Lite and Super Vee Lite. Winners are awarded based on distance travelled, with each course covering around eight nautical miles and each race lasting about an hour.

Melbourne-based owner of Class One superboat *Impact Steel* and six-times Australian Championship winner, Tony Low, recently retired from the cockpit after 32 years of racing. *Impact Steel* is this year being raced by Steve Jellick and Mike Beile and has finished 2nd and 3rd respectively in the first two rounds.

"It really is the best thing you can do sitting down," Mr Low said.

"Even as the crew chief, superboat racing keeps me really busy – I just don't have any time to play golf, go to the races or go out with bad women!"

Racing at this elite level is also a significant financial commitment, with Mr Low reckoning that to buy a new Class One boat "you wouldn't get much change from \$1.2 million". Participants rely heavily on sponsors, without whom there would be no show.

"With the expectation that a round of the 2008 World Championship will be held in Australia, I can certainly see that our sport will be embraced by the Australian public as it is in Europe, where up to 900,000 people crowd the shorelines to witness these exciting machines in action," Mr Low said.

The Hobson's Bay Offshore Powerboat Classic will take place over 9-10 February, coinciding with the iconic St Kilda Festival on February 10. Spectators can watch the boats race past within excellent view of the shore, with the best vantage points anywhere along Beach Road, particularly Station Pier, St Kilda Pier, St Kilda Marina and within the St Kilda Festival.

The Williamstown Offshore Powerboat Classic kicks-off the following weekend, with the best spectator spot being the Reserve at Point Gellibrand.

The Offshore Superboat Championships series culminates with stops five to seven in New South Wales and Queensland throughout March and June.

(Pictured: The Offshore Superboat Championships – Australia's 'Formula One on water' – is set to wow Melbourne crowds during February. Images: www.urbanangles.com)

Further information:

Offshore Superboat Championships – 0414 371 122 or visit: www.aopc.com.au

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