



Confederation of Australian Motor Sport

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

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- Guam International Raceway • Folkrace

### THE CONFEDERATION

of Australian Motor Sport Limited (CAMS) is an astonishingly busy bunch down under that sanctioned almost 2500 motorsports events in 2016.

Claiming 82,500 members that populate 560 affiliated clubs, there are some 25,000 licensed competitors and an army of accredited volunteer officials that hovers around 9000.

CAMS became the national sporting authority (ASN) for motorsports in Australia in 1953, and has worked with the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) since 1958.

**Drawing attention to lesser-known or obscure motorsports activity, this installment of PRI's International Report focuses on an organization that works to promote and encourage competition in Australia, a drag strip in Guam with car counts that rival those of top tracks in the US, and an entertaining venue for participants and fans alike in Scandinavia.**

The current big push is building "Ricciardo's Racers," the organization's flagship youth program, now in its third year, which is led by Aussie F1 star Daniel Ricciardo. "This program

gives kids aged 12 through 15 their first taste of motorsport in a fun, safe environment, with great coaching from some V8 Supercars drivers," explained Commercial Director John Murphy.

## By Louise Ann Noeth

"We've had great success that has led to a terrific increase in junior membership," he continued. "Today we have approximately 1500 junior license holders, and that is a jump up over 50 percent from two years ago."

Each year the group abandons the continent's various and sundry pits for the banquet hall to bestow awards that recognize the actions and achievements of people who go above and beyond what's reasonably expected, and in doing so, encourages aspirations and ideals of the highest standards and values, according to the organization. The 2017 Awards ceremony takes place on February 18, honoring the previous year's actions and achievers.

US-based motorsports suppliers interested in the large and active Australian industry should know the CAMS-commissioned Ernst & Young study measured the economic contribution of the industry at \$2.7 billion AUD per annum.

"They can get involved by having a presence at some of the great motorsport events, trade shows or through sponsorships," offered Murphy. "We also have the CAMS Shop, our online store, [www.cams.com.au](http://www.cams.com.au), which retails a range of motorsport-related products and apparel."

Murphy added, "We manage the rules, regulations and judicial structure to ensure safe and fair competition. We also do a lot of work on developing four-wheeled motorsport and increasing participation, from club level, juniors, right through to the elite level."

Additional programs CAMS offers include its Young Officials program, which encourages young motorsports enthusiasts to participate in all aspects of officiating at major race events; a Gold Level accreditation as a Regional Training Provider (RTP) with an experienced international training team; and the CAMS Driver Development Program that hosts camps where young talent is discovered and supported. CAMS also is an official partner of Formula SAE-Australasia, a competition which allows students to develop their skills in

management, design, communication, manufacturing, research and business operations in a real-world environment.

"Australia is one of the few countries fortunate enough to host two separate FIA world championship events—the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix at Albert Park in Melbourne, and Rally Australia, a round of the World Rally Championship held on the Coffs Coast in New South Wales. Both are incredible events that put Australian motorsport, and CAMS, on the world stage," Murphy concluded.

### Guam International Raceway

One of the most welcomed race tracks in all of the Pacific Ocean sits on the island of Guam, where the top speed on every commercial roadway is a perpetual cruise of 35 mph.

Still, Guam loves its automobiles. Each household has an estimated two to three cars—the main mode of transportation—and islanders have a natural desire to customize their rides.

"Our International Raceway is the perfect place to open up that vehicle," explained Tom Akigama, a consultant for Guam International Raceway. "Mainstream media and publications also drive the motorsports culture."

Located 6115 miles from the United States' West Coast, the island's 212 square miles offers motorsports aplenty for some 153,000 residents.

Drag racing is organized by the Drag Racing Association of Guam. Autocross



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Solo races are put together by the Guam Road Racers Association/Guam Region SCCA. Drifting is organized by Upshift Enterprises and the Guam Drifting Association. And motocross comes through the Guam International Raceway Motorcycle and ATV Club.

“Street cars and mini trucks gravitate to drag racing with the weekly Friday street night events, and special events will draw the faster cars,” explained Akigama. “Auto shows at the Raceway always do well.

“Drifting is the newest, but it is a crowd-drawing event and has seen more participants each year. Motocross has also gained more traction,” he added.

Some mainland drag strips might envy Guam’s drag racing pull that can draw in up to 100 participants. The Raceway Auto Shows often top 200 vehicles, with drifting attracting roughly 20 competitors.

Completing the event schedule is off-road buggy racing that lures off-island participation from Japan, as well as the US during the annual APL “Smokin Wheels” event that grids some 30 vehicles.

Guam International Raceway was built just outside Yigo, the island’s northernmost village with a soil rich for growing coffee beans, cocoa, pineapples, oranges and tangerines.

Breaking down the age demographic is tough, especially if trying to pinpoint growth. The islanders try everything! And you also have to factor in the US military presence.

Naval Base Guam is located on Apra Harbor, part of Joint Region Marianas, which also houses Andersen Air Force Base, Commander Submarine Squadron 15, and Coast Guard Sector Guam, and is home base to dozens of Pacific Command, United States Pacific Fleet, Seventh Fleet, and Seabee units.

“It is hard to say, as the demographic is wide when it comes to drag racing,” offered Akigama. “Off-road buggies see 50 and up, while drifting participants are 20 to 33. And motocross is heavy with youth, with a few in the vet class.”

Guam has a couple of shops that carry

aftermarket parts and accessories, but the bulk is ordered online. Summit Racing is one of the top online stores, according to Akigama.

“Deliveries from the US mainland are usually through USPS Priority Mail,” he said. “Some specialty parts might come from parts of Asia, but 90 percent [are] from the USA.”

For more information about the race track and its events, visit [www.guamraceway.com](http://www.guamraceway.com).

### **Folktrace**

While America has baseball and apple pie, the Scandinavians have “folktracing,” a low-speed, utterly modest and welcoming form of motorsports that is adored by spectators who loyally flock to every event.

Because it goes slowly and is awash with safety controls, the competition is easy and cheap to participate in. The point is not so much to win as it is to have a rip-roaring good time.

Among one of its provisions is that it requires the cars be put up for sale for a ridiculously low price after the event, so dumping a wad of money into the racing machine is silly; but it is also the reason so many competitors converge on the starting line year after year.

The concept is based on Finland’s entry-level form of Nordic rally cross called Jokamiesluokka, or “everyone’s class,” that spread to Norway, where it is known as “Bilcross.” Denmark’s competition is termed “Folkeræs,” and for Sweden, it’s simply “Folktrace.”

Capped at a max of 50 miles per hour, the 1.5-mile (2400-meter) course is little more than a sand or gravel surface, so there is a good deal of friendly, deliberate fish-tailing, paint swapping and fender whacking on straightaways as well as turns.

Thankfully, all cars are fitted with roll cages, and drivers swaddled in Nomex. Good thing, as some heats are run under muddy conditions, and contestants regularly put the rubber side to the sky.

A variety of competitions are held, divided into different classes by gender and age: junior and senior, with the



youngest drivers at age 15. The race is comprised of multiple heats of six cars each, where drivers earn points according to their finishing spots that will determine their starting position on the next tier of competition finals. The winner of the “A” final wins the overall event.

Admittedly, it’s slightly odd to watch Volvos, Saabs and Opels throw moves usually reserved for sports cars and elegant open wheel beasts, but you’ll also see European mainland and Japanese cars on Folktrace day. This is surely a race for homely, plain transport machines, but the smart money is on one of those stoutly built for the masses, because parts are plentiful and cheap.

Spectators marvel at, and appreciate, the Nordic race control that keeps the action humming along regardless of wrecks and roll-overs. Off the track, it is noteworthy that spectators are very well behaved.

US parts suppliers may find customers in need of safety equipment, or perhaps inexpensive but sturdy replacement parts; clearly this is not the place where one finds high-end rebuilds or extensive race prep. That said, many racers have found limited sponsor support for a segment that can stage races year-round, with meets every other weekend during the summer months.

