



## GROUP S RACING ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – CALENDAR YEAR 2017 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Wow what a year, and where did it go?

In my first year as President, I have to acknowledge that the amount of work, time and effort that is invested in Group S, was a little more than expected, however at the same time, hugely worthwhile and rewarding. Hopefully the hard work from your GSRA committee is showing. There is more to come in 2018!

### **Some highlights**

In 2017, I believe the GSRA committee have made great progress improving elements in and around Group S. Some of these are more visible than others, and we need to ensure we keep providing more to members. Some of the notables highlights are:

- Name boards for all members to use at meetings, which has in turn;
- Creating Group S paddock areas at meeting (when able)
- Saturday afternoon drink and nibbles at meetings (when able)
- Qualifying grid sheets for meetings
- The improvement in social media channel communication and promotion
- Post Race Surveys for members to provide feedback
- Annual Survey for members to complete and provide general feedback
- Securing a place at Bathurst 12 Hour – and being oversubscribed in 5 days!

### **Membership fees**

In the past week we notified members about 2018 membership renewals, and the increase to \$100. Some of you may be asking why the increase? Don't we have enough funds? What is the increase to be spent on? These are valid questions. I will state right from the outset, that the GSRA is not seeking to have a bank balance full of funds and to then do nothing. Members deserve to see and reap the benefits of their fees, whilst ensuring the long term financial stability and viability.

The GSRA Committee acknowledge the increase is a break with tradition. The annual fee for GSRA membership has remained consistent for as many years as I can remember. However, with the goal to 'do more', critically funds are required to make these initiatives happen. To date, many of these have been borne personally by the GSRA members to prove the concept or initiative. The name boards being a case in point, whereby Tom Walstab has funded this off his own accord and generosity. Thank you Tom for your hard work in 2017 and your generosity in time and effort generating the name boards among other things.

In short, funds are to be used for the benefit of members. The increase to \$100 is still at the lower end for similar motorsport and car clubs; a key consideration that was taken into account. I

encourage members to review the Committee Meeting minutes where the analysis is shown in detail. We firmly believe the \$100 is realistic, and still provides excellent value for something that we are all strongly passionate about, Group S Racing.

Those reading the report of the Treasurer will note the large balance, however for clarity, there are funds still to be paid to the promoters of Bathurst 12 Hour, and the other associated costs with this event. The Bathurst 12 Hour event for the GSRA is budgeted to be a break-even. Again a very big thanks to Geoff Byrne for managing the accounts for the GSRA in his role as Treasurer.

### **GSRA Membership**

The Association has now completed 12 very successful years. Our membership has grown from the early days and is now consistently sits around the 160+ mark. There is always annual fluctuation, but as some members leave to pursue other interests they are replaced with others entering the category.

Our membership reflects the continued interest in historic car racing, at a time when support for most other historic categories seems to be diminishing based on the size of grids we see at our race calendar meetings. Our membership needs to remain strong for our category to retain its strength.

Some cars have recently changed hands, and new cars are in build, so it seems the future for Group S, for now, seemingly remains very bright. However, we need to ensure that we keep our category strong, relevant and prominent, to ensure we maintain our strong support in both membership and entrants at race meetings.

### **Racing in 2017**

We have had another great season of racing despite a few meetings that did not eventuate. Still, our 3 state based Championships were fiercely contested, and I congratulate all those that took to the track in 2017. The results are available on the Group S website.

Congratulations to those of you who have won the trophies in the Catalina, Goldfields' and Capricorn Cups. Group S racing is a sport for amateurs and that's the way we like it. But we all like a trophy too, so we are endeavoring to provide more of these in 2018 at each meet.

In 2017 we have continued to work closely with our race promoters; HSRCA, VHRR, FoSC, ARDC, HRCC, SCCSA, MGCC Tasmania (Baskerville) and Austin 7 Club. We have been able to continue our strong grids and continued to develop healthy relationships. The feedback that we have been able to pass on via the GSRA Post Race Survey's has been warmly welcomed by the promoters, as they seek to find ways to ensure the longevity and success of their events.

New lap records have been set during the year by a range of class capacity cars and at various tracks. Tyre technology continues to play a major part in these times. Thank you to Colin Wilson-Brown for continuing to provide the service of Lap Records on the Group S website.

Hung Do is a quiet achieving champion behind the scenes of Group S, calculating and publishing the points for all our race meetings. The statistics from our meetings are impressive, and below are some of the highlights.

- 13 Events
- 319 entries
- Average of 2.7 events per member
- Sbb was the largest class

- Scc was the second largest class
- Saa was smallest class
- Winton FOS had the largest number of entries; 50 cars
- Most events in 2017
  - Mike Byrne – 9
  - Geoff Byrne, Doug Barbour, Greg Horwill – 7
  - Stan Adler – 6

Hung also manages the website and works quickly and diligently to upload all the requests. Thank you Hung for your dedication and contribution to Group S Racing.

### **Racing in 2018**

The GSRA calendar for 2018 is about to be published and I believe it provides an excellent range of racing opportunities. Again Tom Walstab will provide the very useful file (available on the website) that can be uploaded to your computer's or phone's calendar.

The great news about 2018 is that we don't have any date clashes! The date conflict of Sandown and SMSP in November 2017 was unfortunate; however most pleasing was that we were still able to put 75+ cars on 2 grids in two states on the same weekend. Testament to the strength of Group S.

2018 kicks off at the Bathurst 12 Hour, with 60 cars taking to our iconic Australian race track. This is followed a month or so later at Phillip Island Classic in 2018 after Sa/Sb having their 'holiday' in 2017. The rest of the calendar is steady and consistent, with events spanning 5 states.

The calendar as always is subject to change, and the GSRA committee is still working on a some other event for 2018 that have yet to be finalized. If and when information comes to hand, we will notify all members asap, as I am sure it will be another highlight for 2018.

### **Class and capacity review**

The class and capacity structure was reviewed at the start of 2017, conducted by my Hung Do and myself. The changes are now finalised, with some consolidation of the classes, and the realignment of some class capacities. We strongly believe that this is in the best interests of Group S, and we plan to conduct another review at the end of the 2019 season. The new class structure can be viewed on the Group S website.

### **Driving Standards**

Driving standards is always a contentious topic, and whilst damage could be deemed inevitable, the GSRA is looking to take a harder stand towards those repeat offenders. There have been a number of incidents that have caused substantial damage to competitors' cars in 2017, but thankfully less than 2016.

We hope to see a continual improvement in 2018. Let's keep looking after each other out on the track.

### **National Race Numbers**

The GSRA continues to administer a Race Number Register, and in 2017 we moved to a National number system, therefore trying to limit the number of duplicate numbers between NSW and Victoria. New house rules also mean that if you do not compete for a year, your number will be opened up. We feel that having a reserved race number means just that, you race and you use it. Use it or lose it. Thanks to Tom Walstab for taking this over from Colin Wilson-Brown who has

historically provided this service to the Group S members. The reserve number list is on the website and on TeamApp.

### **CAMS related topics**

I recommend that you visit the CAMS website regularly to see if any Technical Bulletins have been promulgated that effect Group S. The Minutes of the AHMSC also make interesting reading and I commend them to you as another valuable source of information.

The AHMSC continue to meet and their updates of minutes are available online on the CAMS website. There are some changes and amendments that start on the 1.1.2018 so I would encourage you all to review these once posted on the CAMS website.

As a reminder to all Group S members, engine sealing is mandatory from 1.1.2018. Again please make yourself aware of the process on the CAMS website.

### **Eligibility Issues**

This is always a vexed area but not one within the direct purview of the Association. Rather we have a responsibility to pass on to those charged with making the rules, enforcing the rules and issuing log books commentary from members about what they see as eligibility issues or potential problem areas.

### **TeamApp**

Our Vice President Tom Walstab has continued to evolve the use of TeamApp where information can be made available instantaneously on your smartphone. In 2017 we used TeamApp to share grid sheets, qualifying and race results, as well as general notifications about Group S. We urge you to download and use it if you have not already.

### **Post Race Surveys**

The committee has also continued to provide Post Race Surveys, and initiative a similar Annual Survey. Thank you to those that continue to provide your feedback. We encourage all members to fill in their opinions, as it is only with this format that we can substantiate and validate our comments, concerns, and appreciation.

All surveys are available to be viewed on the Group S website.

### **Annual Survey**

Once again in 2018 we will conduct the Annual Survey, as we use this information and platform to ensure that the majority of members are able to express clearly what is supported and what is not. Plus you all have great ideas, so keep sharing those too!

### **Vale – Laurie Burton & Colin Fulton**

It was with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of both Laurie Burton and Colin Fulton in 2017. Both Laurie and Colin were terrific guys, and both muscled their respective V8 powered cars with great success in Group S. The GRSA committee pass out condolences to the families. They will both be missed.

### **Group S Championship presentations, including drinks & nibbles at all race meetings in 2018**

With Bathurst being the first event in NSW for 2018, we plan to conduct the presentations at Bathurst for all three Cups. Most award winners will be present at this event and the GSRA feel this would be a great way to celebrate.

We will however continue with the traditional drinks and nibbles at Phillip Island, and use that as an excuse to also hand out any remaining trophies.

Additionally, we will try to host at every meeting in 2018, drinks and nibbles on the Saturday afternoon after racing has concluded. These opportunities to get everyone together is something that many believe essential in maintaining the great rapport and camaraderie between competitors.

Keep an eye on TeamApp at your next race meeting for time and venue, or look for one of the GSRA committee.

### **HUGE thanks to the GSRA team**

It has been a pleasure to work with all committee members, GSRA ex-officio appointees and all of you; the GSRA members.

I wish to thank the Committee for their advice, guidance, efforts, commitment and support. Great teamwork is yielding some great results, and we seek to continue this unity going forward.

Notably I wish to thank and acknowledge André Breit who has provided his services in the role of Secretary. He has decided to step down from the GSRA committee after 10 years of service. On behalf of all the members I thank him for the years of service, and hope that he is able to continue enjoying racing in his Datsun for many years to come.

On the flip side I am happy to welcome Damien Meyer to the role of Secretary. Damien is well known being up the pointy end in his very rapid blue Sprite, and has kindly accepted approaches by a few of us to accept the role of Secretary. Damien is a great addition to the team, so please congratulate him when you see him next.

Also I wish to acknowledge the contributions of Bob Buck, the CAMS Group S Technical Officer, who also contributed a wealth of guidance and advice from an eligibility perspective in 2017. Please feel free to reach out to Bob if you have questions or concerns about your car, or topics such as engine sealing.

Thanks go to each and every GSRA member, without whom, we would not have this great association. I have appreciated the words of encouragement and appreciation from many of you, and rest assured we will continue to bring more to the table in 2018 to continue to grow, professionalise, and promote our great band of racers.

I wish you and your families and friends a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, safe and enjoyable 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Webster." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

**Alex Webster**  
**President**  
**Group S Racing Association**  
*11th December 2017*

