

Sunshine drives a project further

Business, marketing and engineering experts are sharing their skills, writes Alexandra Economou.

A SOLAR car project is giving South Australian baby boomers an opportunity to share business expertise and learn new skills.

Boomer-age engineers, marketers and internet experts are among those helping TAFE SA with its entry in the World Solar Challenge, which starts on October 25.

While some are involved in building the solar electric car for the 3000km race, others are helping with marketing, promotion and increasing visitor traffic to TAFE's Solar Spirit Australia website.

Electronics engineer and TAFE lecturer Gerry Jordans, 64, has been involved with the project since 2000 – the first year the school competed. He hopes to continue his involvement in the biennial event, rather than retire next year.

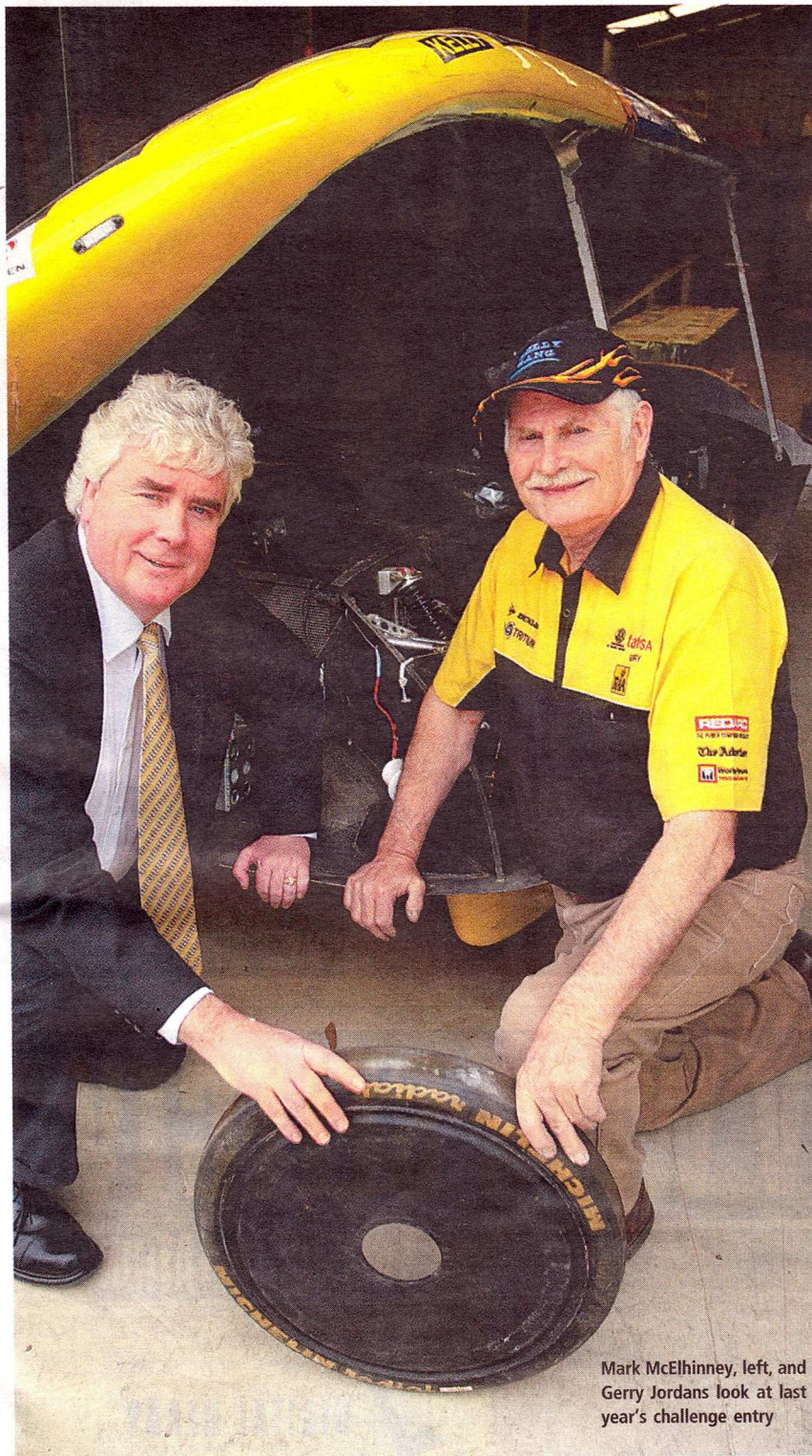
“After the last race, in 2007, we were talking about building a new electric

solar car to meet new specifications,” Mr Jordans says. “I put a proposition to (TAFE) management, which they accepted. When the car is finished it will have 26,500 solar panels, creating 1600W of energy, and we hope to average speeds of 100km/h.”

Marketing expert Mark McElhinney will use his new website, which sells a range of electronic and solar products, to help direct traffic to the Solar Spirit website.

“One of the things (people and) businesses can do is buy wattage or ‘solar hours’ as sponsorship,” he says. The solar hours can be bought from solarspiritaustralia.com to raise funds.

Richmond-based digital media company WallCann built the Solar Spirit website. Managing director Clive Wallace says the project has enabled people of all ages, particularly boomers, to gain meaningful work. »



Mark McElhinney, left, and Gerry Jordans look at last year's challenge entry