

# MEDIA RELEASE



September 9 2009

## **HISTORIC MIDDLE EAST DOUBLE HEADER STARTS V8 SUPERCAR SEASON**

In an unprecedented major step for Australia's leading sporting export, the V8 Supercar Championship Series will begin the 2010 season with a unique Middle East double header and back-to-back races in Abu Dhabi and Bahrain.

V8 Supercars' overwhelming success in the Middle East through a key partnership developed with the Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in the past three years has led to the formation of a further major alliance with the brand new, state of the art Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi.

The opening two rounds of the 2010 V8 Supercar Championship calendar will take place within the space of a week and on consecutive weekends, making this an extremely attractive proposition for V8 fans from Australia and around the world to travel to the region. The first of the two will take place at Yas Marina Circuit on February 18-20 and will be followed by the *Desert 400* at the BIC on February 25-27. The traditional Australian opening event, the Clipsal 500, remains at the start of the domestic leg of the calendar on March 11-14.

In announcing this momentous move, which will also mean a mid-season Championship break in 2010, V8 Supercars Australia Executive Chairman Tony Cochrane said the wonderful relationship between the sport of V8 Supercars and the BIC, and the two countries, had proven the merit of staging the twin events.

"The friendship built thus far with His Highness the Crown Prince of Bahrain, the BIC Board of Directors, the Bahraini people and the region as a whole has been truly incredible," Mr Cochrane said.

"The entire region is fast becoming an important part of Australia's export trade, which includes the Australian-made Holden Commodore, and Government to Government relationships.

"These events will reinforce these wonderful relationships with two fantastic countries that are great friends of V8 Supercars and Australia.

"It also promotes what is a great region to travel to and reaffirms to Australians that the Gulf is a safe and friendly travel destination. With Etihad Airways and Emirates Airlines scheduling regular and direct flights to the UAE, Abu Dhabi is easily accessible from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

"As a result we expect an increasing number of Australian V8 fans to take this unique opportunity and make the week long trip to the region next year for the opening two rounds of the championship."

As a result of the announcement the BIC has agreed to re-schedule this year's event in the Gulf, originally slated for November 5-7, to the start of next year. A replacement event will be announced on Sunday at this weekend's L&H 500 at Phillip Island in Victoria when the remainder of the 2010 calendar will also be released.

"In very good faith the BIC generously agreed to withdraw this year's race from the calendar in order for us to come back a little over three months later. It would have been feasibly impossible for us to travel to the Middle East with all our requirements twice in such a short space of time.

"So to the BIC we thank you for allowing us this great opportunity in early 2010 and working with us to reach this point."

The Desert 400 round at BIC ([www.bahraingp.com](http://www.bahraingp.com)) will feature a new format in 2010 with two 200 kms races replacing the previous three races run at the Sakhir circuit over the previous three years. Yas Marina Circuit ([www.yasmarinacircuit.ae](http://www.yasmarinacircuit.ae)) has been designed to produce an unforgettable spectator and viewer experience. Inspired by the culture and values of Abu Dhabi combined with cutting-edge innovation and luxury features, it is a truly unique place.

Richard Cregan, CEO of Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management, the operators of Yas Marina Circuit, said that bringing Australia's V8 Supercars to the Emirate was part of a comprehensive programme to offer the general public a broad range of the world's top racing series.

"Our mandate at ADMM is to develop Yas Marina Circuit into a regional and international centre of motorsport excellence.

"These are cars that we all see on the streets of Abu Dhabi, everyday. On the track, spectators and viewers will witness some of the most sensational wheel-to-wheel racing imaginable.

"Year round, Yas Marina Circuit will be the venue for many of the world's top motor racing series as well as offering opportunities for the general public to experience the thrill of motorsport within a safe environment," he said.

The more than 100 ton of cars and equipment, with an estimated value in excess of \$AUD50 million, will be flown in two purpose built 747-400 aircraft from Australia to Abu Dhabi before being re-packed for the short flight north to Bahrain and then returned home.

The remainder of the 2010 V8 Supercar Championship Series calendar will be announced at this weekend's L&H 500 at Phillip Island in Victoria as has been the case in years past.