

22 September 2008



Media Release

Dunlop celebrates a proud 120 year history at Bathurst

Dunlop will celebrate its 120th birthday at this year's Bathurst 1000 – 36 years after changing Australian motorsport by introducing slick tyres that helped Peter Brock win his first of nine Bathursts.

This legendary motorsport moment is one of many for the racing icon, which starting in 1888 when a Scottish-born veterinary surgeon, John Boyd Dunlop, invented the pneumatic bicycle tyre.

In trying to improve comfort and handling for his son's tricycle, Dunlop wrapped the tricycle wheels in thin rubber sheets, glued them together and inflated them with a football pump – using the top of a baby's bottle as a valve. That way he developed the first air cushioning system in history and laid the foundation for the first pneumatic tyre.

Kevin Fitzsimons, Dunlop's V8 operations manager, said that since this landmark event, Dunlop has won a huge amount of the world's two and four wheel races.

"Dunlop has helped drivers stand on the podium in all forms of racing competition for more than a century," Mr Fitzsimons said.

"Some significant early achievements include: the successful Paris – Vienna race in 1902; Henry Segrave breaking the 300km/h barrier and setting the world land speed record in 1927; Malcolm Campbell's land speed record with the Bluebird in 1931; and John Cobb becoming the first man to break the 500mph barrier on land before reaching 634 km/h in 1947.

"The motorsport results speak for themselves with Dunlop winning 82 Grand Prix with drivers such as Jack Brabham (Cooper), Phil Hill (Ferrari), Graham Hill (BRM), Jim Clark (Lotus), John Surtees (Ferrari) and Jackie Stewart (Matra).

"Dunlop has also won 34 Le Mans 24h races – the world's oldest, longest and most testing endurance race.

"Dunlop has also dominated the Australian Supersport and Superbike Championships and V8 Championships as the sole tyre supplier here in Australia," he said.

From the world of racing to everyday driving, the company's objective remains to continuously produce tyres that enhance the performance of vehicles and the driving experience of its drivers.

What is learned on the track is applied to the road with Dunlop's technicians and designers in Europe, the USA, and Japan the first to apply race tyre performance standards to tyres designed for everyday motoring.

“The motorsport industry knows that there is no better way to test groundbreaking tyres than in the heat of competition. But motorsport drivers are not alone in benefiting from Dunlop’s racing expertise,” Mr Fitzsimons said

“Dunlop’s technological advances offer motorists and their vehicles the quality, durability and endurance of tyres designed for the racetrack.”

In 2008, Dunlop introduced a new control tyre to the V8 Supercar Championship Series and on the road we launched the latest in a long line of passenger and 4x4 tyres such as the Dunlop SP FastResponse and Grandtrek PT2 4x4 range.

“Dunlop looks forward to celebrating its 120 year anniversary at the most prestigious races of all – the Bathurst 1000,” he said.

Ends...

About Dunlop

Dunlop is one of the world's leading manufacturers of high and ultra high performance tyres with an impressive track record of motorsport successes. Dunlop's extensive racing experience has led to innovative technologies for tyres designed for everyday motoring. Always looking for maximising driving pleasure, Dunlop offers all types of motorists the performance and durability of the latest tyre technologies.

Many of the world's leading vehicle manufacturers fit Dunlop tyres as standard, including Alfa Romeo, Audi, BMW, Honda, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Peugeot, Porsche, Renault, Rover, Seat, Skoda, Toyota and Volkswagen.

For more information on Dunlop, visit www.dunloptyres.com.au