



PRESS RELEASE

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AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

SAVE EL RACING CIRCUIT - AA

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BEGINS

SAVE EL RACING CIRCUIT – AA

The Automobile Association of South Africa has voiced its concern that the historic East London Grand Prix Circuit may face closure to make way for a university. The proposal is one of the options mooted in a recent presentation by the Buffalo City Development Agency in East London.

"The circuit, first opened in 1934, is part of the motoring heritage of South Africa," said AASA Head of Public Affairs, Rob Handfield - Jones. "It was the scene of classic Grand Prix racing long before Formula One became an official championship in 1950. It later hosted legends such as Jim Clark and Graham Hill in the 1960s when the F1 grid was also shared by South African stars including John Love, Doug Serrurier and Paddy Driver," he added.

The circuit is famed for the high-speed Potter's Pass and Rifle Range corners, two of the fastest corners in South African motor-racing. With the ocean literally a stone's throw away, the sea-level track makes for picturesque spectating and allows racing cars to develop their full rated engine power. The circuit is a favourite with racing drivers, and some years ago when the National Championship drivers were asked to choose a circuit to host an additional round of that year's series, the challenging East London circuit won the poll. The AA, which was the controlling body of motorsport in South Africa prior to 1993, oversaw innumerable events at the circuit.

"South Africans have only recently celebrated Heritage Day," said Handfield – Jones. "The proposal by the Buffalo City Development Agency, if implemented, would destroy, rather than preserve our country's motoring heritage and the AA strongly opposes any steps which might lead to loss of the historic East London circuit," he said.

The AA has called on all South Africans to lend their support to an online petition supported by SA motorsport controlling body, Motorsport South Africa. The petition, available at <http://www.petitiononline.com/ELGP2008/petition.html>, calls on the Buffalo City Development Agency to reconsider the proposal to close the racing circuit. "In particular, anyone who has ever participated in or watched motorsport in this country should feel duty-bound to add their voice," said Handfield - Jones. "We must guard against priceless pieces of motoring history being erased at the stroke of a pen," he concluded.

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For further details contact:

Rob Handfield – Jones (Head of Public Affairs: AASA)

Tel: 011 799 1779

Cell: 083 260 8663

E-mail: robh@aasa.co.za

Gary Ronald (Public Affairs Manager)

Tel: 011 799 1180

Cell: 083 386 6954

E-mail: gronald@aasa.co.za