Challenge Day 3-4: Blown away!

When I started writing this in Alice Springs yesterday, I thought of the corny title ‘Towards a town called Alice (Springs)’ but after what happened today it can only be called Blown away!

Last night we thought the many, many, MANY flies was the worst thing this evening but no.. Right after dinner an enormous hot gust of wind struck us, nearly knocking over our workshop tent that protects Stella Era. At least ten guys jumped up to hold it down and all was good. So we thought. Ten minutes later the wind struck us again and an emergency clearing of the campsite took place. Within no time people were shouting for hammers, pegs, lights and a line was formed automatically to dump all chairs, tables, washing up, pans, cookers, well, basically everything apart from the tents in the truck to keep it from blowing away.

We knew that on Wednesday there would be lots of wind but it came much earlier than expected. Things got even worse the next day as our fellow Dutch team from Twente literally were blown off the road! We feel bad for them that their challenge is now over and the same goes for the team from Aachen (although on Twitter they say to be driving again, hurray!). All other teams were on a 80km/h restriction so no more accidents could happen. We are very grateful that nobody got hurt!

Meanwhile we had to keep going for a 350km stretch with headwinds of 40km/h with gusts from the side as well. Our camper took several hits which wasn’t nice so we really feared for our beloved Stella Era but she made it just fine!

On challenge day 3 there were 2 Control Stops, one in Barrow Creek and one in Alice Springs, which meant we were halfway the trip to Adelaide. After Alice Springs we stopped by the side of the road to do some actual outback camping, well, next to the highway that is. I was told the millions of stars are amazing, such a shame there was a near full moon that took away the view of the Milky Way not to mention the ominous clouds..

We also had a flat tire with the camper but that seems so trivial after what happened today. Our truck guys Wouter and Mathijs managed to get us back on the road within ten minutes! Thank you guys!
Luckily it was us and not Stella Era with a flat tire!

Challenge day 4 took us to Coober Pedy, known for its opal mines (very precious stones). At the first Control Stop the news about Twente and Aachen left us all in shock!

The trip itself was mostly very long and tiring because of the strong winds (Mia’s arms were hurting from grasping the steering wheel). We had to occupy ourselves with trivia bingo (stupid questions that come to mind when feeling a bit bored, questions like ‘how cold is it in space (answer: zero Kelvin)). Next bingo question was, are there any wild horses in Coober Pedy because there was a horse that jumped on the road right in front of us (luckily we missed it) and moreover, the horse missed Stella Era.

Now we are on a campsite again and we are cold, for the first time in uh, a long time anyway! It is going to be only 9 degrees tonight so jumpers on everybody!

**Big question for everybody is of course, how are we doing?**

On the BWSC tracker app (iPhone only) or this page the position of all teams can literally be tracked. However, that is not telling you everything. Several teams have to trailer their car due to various reasons which means they seem ahead of us which in a literal sense is true of course. However, all Cruisers that are still driving are in Coober Pedy tonight.

These teams have trailered their solar car: Onda Solare, Lodz Solar Team, ATN Solar Car and even Bochum we heard (but unconfirmed).

We are now no longer in the Northern Territory but in South Australia with a different timezone, but the challenge stays in Darwin time. Note to self: get up on time in Darwin time!

2 more days to go, doesn’t seem long but we still have 850km to go..
Some happy campers unaware of the day ahead!

Our team Media, on ladders, mountains or cars, everything for a good shot! This is near Coober Pedy.
Like driving on Mars.