

## Morris Minors here for major celebration

Around 100 Morris Minors will be in the Canberra region between 21-23 September for a national rally to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the production of the first modern Morris Minor in 1948.

The cars will come from all states for the 19<sup>th</sup> Morris Minor Clubs of Australia National Rally hosted by the Canberra Region Morris Minor Club. You can see them on public display at the Queanbeyan Town Park between 10 am and about 3 pm on Saturday, 22 September.

On Sunday 23 September, they'll be on the region's roads taking in the sights, including in the Parliamentary Triangle, at the National Arboretum, and in Bungendore.

Many will be strictly original while others have modern engines, brakes and suspensions from Nissan, Toyota, Fiat and other makers, showing the versatility of the basic car design.

The first modern Morris Minor rolled off a UK production line on 20 September 1948 in time to make its debut at the Earls Court Motor Show later that year.

Hailed as the 'World's Supreme Small Car', it set new standards of exterior styling, internal space use, comfort levels and road-going characteristics while being an affordable and economical family car, with room for four adults and their luggage in a post-World War II era.

While the basic shape remained distinctive and recognisable, the car underwent a succession of improvements over time, in response to market needs and developments in automotive engineering.

For example, the original side-valve engine was replaced with a more efficient overhead valve engine with further upgrades and larger overhead valve engines resulting in the Morris Minor 1000 which was immensely popular in the UK and abroad.

Initially Australia imported UK-made cars before a plant was built at Zetland in Sydney in 1951 to assemble Morris cars sent in CKD (Completely Knocked Down) form, using locally made engines, gearboxes and back axles.

Ironically, the Morris Mini and other Morris products spelled the Minor's end, despite upgrades and modifications, with the last sedans produced in the UK in 1970 but with some vehicles (travellers, vans and utes) made until late 1971.

Production continued until 1976 in New Zealand, by which time a total of 1.6 million Morris Minors had been built.

Morris Minor owners are proud of their cars and the reception they get – at car shows almost everyone passing by has a Morris Minor story like: 'my father/mother/I learnt to drive/owned a Morris Minor...'

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