

Cannonball slows down to 180kmh limit [Print Entire Page](#)

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Alice Springs.

Organisers of the ill-fated Northern Territory Cannonball Run have ordered a strict speed limit of 180kmh for the remainder of the event.

The maximum is 105 kmh below the top speed posted during last Monday's timed "flying mile" section by wealthy Japanese enthusiast Mr Akhiro Kabe, one of four men killed on Tuesday when his Ferrari F40 crashed into a control point.

Superintendent Terry Ey of the NT police has called in the police surveillance aircraft, fitted with speed detection devices, to assist in the enforcement of the new limit.

The event organiser, Mr Allan Moffat, said last night that the new limit would be rigidly enforced although the daily "flying mile" section on a closed strip of highway would remain unrestricted.

The 3700km event, named after the 1981 Burt Reynolds movie, will restart this morning when the remaining 105 competitors leave Ayers Rock. The six-day event concludes in Darwin tomorrow.

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Further doubt about the future of the controversial event surfaced yesterday with Bathurst touring car champion Mr Gregg Hansford urging Mr Moffat to consider changes.

"They have to get their act together and run it as a rally stage event," Mr Hansford said.

"It's not a race, it is a rally and although it is always difficult to get everything right the first year, the rally style is the way to go."

In the second of Tuesday's special stages Mr Hansford said he averaged 188 kmh, seven more than the minimum of 181 kmh required to meet the allocated time for the section. But these averages will not be possible under the new top speed limit.

Mr Hansford, who is competing in the race, said rally style stage timing with slow-down sections should be incorporated. He also queried the use of the name "Cannonball" with its renegade, unlimited speed concept: "If the event had been called the Darwin to Ayers Rock rally we would have only one third of the bad publicity."

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