

## **A MESSAGE FROM TONY BLAIR**



**10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA**

THE PRIME MINISTER

The London to Sydney Marathon is rightly regarded as one of motor sport's toughest and most prestigious events.

The Marathon is, simply, unique. In view of that special status, it is entirely fitting that the next running should be in the year 2000. The event is not only the ideal way for the rallying community to mark the dawning of the New Millennium, it also complements the Olympics in Sydney, where the race ends on July 2nd.

Even laymen, who follow the Marathon because of the spirit of adventure which it evokes rather than a love of rallying, will be struck by the determination and ingenuity of those taking part. The course, taking in tough stages in varied and demanding conditions in Europe, the Middle East, South East Asia and Australia, would be demanding enough in today's cars. But since all of the participating vehicles (not to mention a good proportion of the drivers!) were built before 1971, the race will be a massive challenge to both the drivers and those often unsung heroes, their mechanics.

I am particularly pleased that such an important event in the rallying calendar retains its "Made in Britain" tag. It is rightly a source of great pride to the motor sport community in the UK that British drivers, mechanics and constructors are held in high esteem throughout the World.

I commend all those who have undertaken the incredibly complex preparations for ensuring that the Marathon is taking place at all; it is an amazing logistical achievement. I wish all those who are taking part the best of luck for a safe and successful race. And I hope that everyone who watches the Marathon enjoys the event as much as the participants.

*Tony Blair*