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F1 Legend Jenson Button Returns to Mount Panorama, Bathurst for Australian Type R Challenge

- Honda Civic Type R sets benchmark lap time for a front-wheel drive production car around the iconic Mount Panorama race circuit at Bathurst
- F1 World Champion Jenson Button records a 2 min 35.207 sec lap around the famous racetrack in a completely standard, factory-spec Civic Type R on road tyres, with no modifications
- 'Type R Challenge 2019' in Australia showcases the performance potential and all-round brilliance of Civic Type R hot hatch

MELBOURNE, May 8, 2019 – Honda Australia made history at the Mount Panorama, Bathurst race circuit[^] over the Easter long weekend by setting a benchmark lap time for a front-wheel drive production car around the iconic track.

Driven by 2009 Formula One world champion, 2018 Super GT Series champion and Honda ambassador, Jenson Button, the factory specification Civic Type R recorded a **2 minute 35.207 second (2:35.207)** lap around Australia's greatest racetrack.

Mount Panorama is best known as the home of the Bathurst 1000 motor race, held each October. An incredibly challenging track for both man and machine, it's technically a street circuit, as it is as a public road for 350 days each year when no racing events are being conducted. The current layout is 6.213 km in length with 23 corners and a 174-metre vertical difference between its lowest and highest points, not to mention gradients as steep as 1:6 or more than 16 per cent.

Button holds the unofficial lap record for the Mount Panorama circuit, a spectacular 1:48.8 lap time set in a Formula One car in 2011 as part of a special event to promote the Australian Grand Prix, so it was fitting that he was the driver to set a benchmark time in the Civic Type R.

The time attack at Bathurst was inspired by the 'Type R Challenge 2018' program, which saw a team of Honda racing stars break front-wheel drive production car records at a range of legendary European

racetracks in a standard production Honda Civic Type R with road tyres – eclipsing the previous record set by the last generation Civic Type R.

As part of its 50th birthday celebrations, Honda Australia brought the challenge concept Down Under to further demonstrate the performance potential of the Civic Type R.

This is the first time the Type R Challenge has taken place outside of Europe and Mount Panorama is arguably one of the greatest racetracks in the world, so it was the perfect venue to showcase the all-round brilliance of Honda's latest Civic Type R.

Button was part of the fifth and final leg of the planned series of lap record attempts across Europe in 2018; his 2:10.19 lap around the Hungaroring Grand Prix circuit in Hungary was a new record, occurring at the same location where he won the first Grand Prix of his career with Honda in 2006.

So there were a number of significant and historic links that all came together to create a special moment at Mount Panorama[^] in Bathurst, Australia on April 22, 2019.

“Mount Panorama holds a unique place in Australian motorsport, so it was a privilege and a thrill for the Honda Australia team to be able to take on that challenge in the Civic Type R, especially with Jenson behind the wheel,” said Honda Australia Director, Mr. Stephen Collins.

Civic Type R made Australian automotive history in 2018, when it became the first car to win both premier performance motoring awards in this country in the same year – MOTOR magazine's *Performance Car of the Year* and *Bang For Your Bucks* titles – a feat that had never been achieved by one car.

In winning MOTOR's 2018 Bang For Your Bucks award, the Civic Type R set a new benchmark lap time around the Winton Motor Raceway circuit, “*comfortably burying previous efforts in any production front-drive car*” according to MOTOR.

“So the Civic Type R had plenty of form to suggest it could achieve something equally special around the revered Mount Panorama, Bathurst circuit and that's exactly what Jenson and the Honda Australia team achieved on Easter Monday,” Mr. Collins said.

Button's 2:35.207 lap time in the Civic Type R around the hallowed tarmac of the Mount Panorama circuit[^] was achieved from just 14 at-pace laps spread over a one hour session in the morning and a brief ten minute session in the afternoon.

"Anything you drive around Mount Panorama is pretty amazing. Up across the top of the mountain, the Type R is so fast through there, so once I got into a rhythm and got used to the speed you can carry, it was really good fun," said Jenson Button, after returning from his final time-attack run.

Despite having never raced at Mount Panorama, Button was able to draw on his vast experience at the highest level of motor racing, 17 years and 306 race starts in Formula One, to come to grips with the difficult Bathurst track.

"I definitely put the car through its paces and it was a quick time, 2 minutes 35 seconds is a really good time in a front-wheel drive car and it was hot as well, so I think if it was cooler you could go a bit quicker, but I do feel like I got everything out of the car," Button said.

"The Honda Civic Type R really is the perfect car for a time attack challenge like this. And it's 100 per cent a road legal car that's straight off the production line, so to do a 2 minute 35 second lap is fantastic.

"We came here to have fun and see what this amazing car can do around this iconic track and it did very well – it's definitely an exciting car for enthusiasts."

The latest Civic Type R has been engineered from the ground up to deliver the most rewarding driving experience in the hot hatch segment. It retains the heritage of Honda's high performance hatchback bloodline, combining expertly tuned front-wheel drive chassis dynamics with aggressive design and finely-honed aerodynamics.

As evidenced by the lap time it recorded around Mount Panorama – along with its lap-record-setting achievements in Europe last year – Civic Type R has dispensed with all accepted wisdom for what is possible in a front-wheel drive vehicle and expanded the performance envelope to the point where the driven wheels is no longer a limiting factor.

It offers an unrivalled combination of everyday useability and track-honed dynamism that has been recognised and praised by critics and experts from all sections of the motoring media, both in Australia and around the world.

The Civic Type R is available from Honda dealers around Australia in a single feature-packed specification, offering a compelling mix of performance and equipment, priced at \$51,990*. Standard equipment includes a four-wheel adaptive damper system with three driving modes, Brembo brake package, 20-inch alloy wheels with Continental SportContact 6 tyres, plus the Honda Sensing suite of safety and driver-assist technologies.

To watch an interview with Jenson Button after he set the benchmark lap time in the Civic Type R for a front-wheel drive production car around the iconic Mount Panorama race circuit[^] at Bathurst, click on the following link: www.honda.com.au/type-r-challenge

[^] Filmed under controlled conditions on closed race circuit with appropriate authorisation and permits

* Manufacturer's List Price (MLP) excludes Dealer Delivery and statutory charges. Premium/Metallic/Pearlescent paint is an additional \$575.

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