



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **23 JULY 2008**

#### **NEW CLERK OF COURSE STEPS UP FOR GORE RALLY**

“The buck stops with me this year.” So say’s Craig Jessop, who after serving a ten year apprenticeship as assistant to Roger Laird, steps up to take charge of his first rally as Clerk Of The Course when the Gore Rally is held on Saturday 2 August.

While he admits to feeling a little bit of apprehension the fact that he has a good team of guy’s on the ground, along with the continued presence of Laird who is acting as an assistant to the new man at the helm this year, is reassuring for Jessop. For his part Laird say’s he is quite comfortable with people of the calibre of Craig Jessop and another licensed Clerk, Gavin Read who is the Chief Safety Officer this year, coming through the ranks. “It is good grounding for future events,” he say’s.

‘I didn’t know what I was getting into,” laughs Jessop as he recalls that he has been involved since the last Wyndham Rally back in 1998.

Rallies organised by the Eastern Southland Car Club have always been extremely popular with competitors and Jessop admits there is satisfaction in being involved with an event that everyone talks about.

However there is a mammoth amount of work involved for Jessop and his team prior to, during and after the event. Since early May there has been a pretty steady workload. Every weekend for the last two months has been taken up with rally duties as have most of his nights for the last month. Life for Jessop and his team will become even more hectic as the rally date approaches and he acknowledges an understanding partner in the form of wife Rachel.

Bringing a rally to fruition is a huge task and includes planning and checking of the route, contacting landowners and residents on that route, talking to councils, sponsors, television crews, writing the route book, ensuring officials are in place, liaising with St Johns and local amateur radio clubs, planning spectator areas plus a myriad of other tasks including building relationships with the community, gaining their trust and hopefully providing benefits to them through the event.

Paperwork is a huge part of such a massive logistical exercise and Jessop says 13,000 bits of paper will be consumed by the event and approximately 120 volunteers will be required. Jessop and most of his core team will each take two or three days off work in the week prior to the rally and part of the task in that time will involve setting up parts of the route in advance.

There are always unforeseen issues to deal with and one of this year’s headaches came recently when heavy snowstorms and high winds saw many of the roads made impassable due to fallen trees. However thanks to

Ernslaw 1 Limited these obstacles have been overcome.

On the day of the event Jessop will be based in Rally Headquarters, so from that aspect he says "the job isn't going to change that much." However Jessop will be the one making the calls this time but he reiterates that he has a strong team of Assistant Clerks managing things on the ground while he is ultimately ticking the boxes and giving approval and dealing with any issues that arise.

Jessop likens Rally Headquarters to a Civil Defence Headquarters as communications and tracking of the cars takes place throughout the day – a far cry from not too many years ago when the whole rally was run by the Clerk Of The Course and a radio operator following the event in a car.

When the rally ends the work does not. After the rally two teams inspect the stages, checking the condition of the roads, possible damage to fences and also that spectator areas are left tidy.

This year the rally is the third and final South Island round of the NZ Truth Rally Xtreme Qualifying Series, Round 3 of the Palmside New Zealand Limited Mainland Rally Championship and the third and final round of the Laird Motorsport Southern Rally Series.

The first car will depart from the Scenic Circle Croydon Hotel at 8am on Saturday 2 August and competitors will face nine Special Stages before the first car returns to the hotel at 5pm that evening. The event comprises 137 kilometres of Special Stage competition along with another 199 kilometres of touring. The Special Stages take competitors into areas such as Pukerau, Conical Hills, Rankleburn, Tapanui and Dusky Forests and back to a stage not used for fourteen years in the Beaumont Forest.

Major sponsors for this year's Gore Rally include the Matura Licensing Trust, Scenic Circle Croydon Hotel, SouthRoads, MWH, McNeill Drilling, Century Batteries and Ernslaw 1 Limited whose support allows the use of the forestry where much of the rally is held.

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