



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **16 JULY 2008**

#### **GORE RALLY TO HOST PRESTIGIOUS CHAMPIONSHIP**

The Gore Rally continues to enhance its reputation as this year it plays host to the third and final South Island round of the NZ Truth Rally Xtreme Qualifying Series on Saturday 2 August. The Xtreme Series is the second tier of New Zealand rallying Championships and as such it will guarantee a strong entry for the event. This is the first time that the Eastern Southland Car Club has had Rally Xtreme status bestowed upon one of its events.

The series features three rounds in the South Island – at South Canterbury, Otago and Gore plus three in the North – Wairarapa, Hamilton and Hawkes Bay. At the conclusion of the qualifying series in each island competitors come together for the finals in Nelson and Manawatu during September and October.

Nelson driver Paul Nicoll, the winner in Otago, leads the South Island 4-wheel-drive section of the series in his Mitsubishi EVO 8 as the competitors head south. Nicoll who won the championship in 2005, it's inaugural year, has 52 points - 9 more than another Nelson driver, Greg Teece in a Mitsubishi EVO 6.5RS. Yet another Nelson competitor, Kieran Hall, is third in the series point standings in his EVO 5. Hall won the first round in South Canterbury but a rear diff problem in the second round at Otago has hampered his challenge. Hall is effectively the defending champion on this event having won the Eastern Southland Car Club's rally last season when it was held in the Catlins area.

Others who have shown good pace to date include Blair Logan of Ashburton and Cantabrians Jeff Judd, the reigning 4-wheel-drive champion, and two-time 2-wheel-drive champion Deane Buist. This season Buist has been at the wheel of his 4-wheel-drive Mitsubishi. Seventeen-year-old Daniel Harris, also of Nelson, is another who has shown real pace thus far.

Other big names in the series include Regan Ross of Kaikoura and Lincoln driver John Giltrap.

In the 2-wheel-drive class Christchurch driver Marcus Van Klink in his 2-litre powered Toyota Trueno AE86 leads with fellow Cantabrian Cameron Moore in a Toyota Levin and Southlander Robert Auld pushing him hard.

In addition to drivers the co-drivers in the series also fight out their own individual championships.

Roger Laird of the Eastern Southland Car Club says, "we are excited to be the final South Island qualifying round of the NZ Truth Rally Xtreme Series. The series has gone from strength to strength and I know we are in for an intense battle. The series has kudos with the competitors as a stepping stone to the New Zealand Rally Championship."

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 approximately 146 kilometres of Special Stage competition along with another 135 kilometres of touring. The Special Stages take competitors into areas such as Pukerau, Conical Hills, Rankleburn, Tapanui, Dusky Forest and back to a stage not used for fourteen years - Beaumont.

The event is also Round 3 of the Palmside New Zealand Limited Mainland Rally Championship and the third and final round of the Laird Motorsport Southern Rally Series.

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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