

MEDIA RELEASE

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MAJOR MILESTONE FOR CATLINS COAST RALLY

The Catlins Coast Rally reaches a major milestone this year with the 20th edition of the event set to take place on the roads of the Catlins area on Saturday 8 August.

Always a popular event, already seventy entries have been received for the rally with some of the biggest names of New Zealand rallying among them.

When you talk big names in New Zealand there are none bigger than Hayden Paddon, the only kiwi to win a World Rally Championship event – the 2016 Rally Of Argentina. The Cromwell based driver will be present in his Hyundai i20 AP4 as he uses the event as a test session to prepare for upcoming events.

Among the entries gunning for victory is reigning New Zealand Rally Champion Ben Hunt, now based in Auckland. Hunt, who also took the National Title in 2015 will be at the wheel of one of the very popular Subaru H6 cars, a 6 cylinder 2-wheel-drive car.

Kingsley Jones of Papakura, fourth in last year's NZ Rally Championship, will make his first appearance at Catlins in a MK2 Ford Escort, 2-wheel-drive car, hired from Jeff Judd while former top kiwi driver Marty Roestenburg of Auckland makes an appearance in his Toyota Starlet.

Last year's winner in a dramatic finish, Gareth Thomas of Darfield, returns this year while four-time victor Andrew Graves of Gore who will make his twentieth appearance in the event will be back in his Mitsubishi EVO 3. Graves had a lead of over 3 minutes last year when he lost a wheel and went off the road on the penultimate stage.

Last year's third place getter and three-time winner, Dean Bond of Balclutha, returns as does last year's Rankleburn Rally winner, Carter Strang of Wallacetown.

The rally will commence at 10.00am on Saturday 8 August adjacent to Owaka Motors and will feature approximately 153 km of high-speed Special Stages at Puaho, Catlins Valley, McNab's Farm, Tawanui, Cannibal Bay and Romahapa.

The event will conclude at Owaka at 3,40pm that afternoon.

The Eastern Southland Car Club is delighted to have the support of the **Clutha Licensing Trust** through their Rosebank Lodge Balclutha establishment, plus **Southroads, Owaka Motors, Yuasa Batteries and Stadium Finance**. The club is also especially grateful to **Rayonier Matariki Forests, the Clutha District Council and the McNab Family** for their assistance with the event.

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Photograph: Last year's Catlins Coast Rally winners Gareth/Gemma Thomas –
Photo - Euan Cameron

