



**22-23
SEPTEMBER 2023**

150KM OF ICONIC GRAVEL SPECIAL STAGES



MULTI-NATIONAL FIELD FOR RETURN OF MANAWATU'S DAYBREAKER RALLY

More than 40 years since the first Daybreaker Rally of club level cars, the 2023 resurrection draws entrants from the Far North to deep south of New Zealand as well as multiple teams from Australia, New Caledonia and the archipelago nation of Vanuatu.

Starting from the Manawatu township of Feilding this Friday 22 September, the Daybreaker Rally, powered by Brian Green Properties, will be held on Saturday, and covers 150km of closed road competition across the Manawatu and Rangitikei districts.

It also serves as the penultimate round of the New Zealand Rally Championship (NZRC) and brings with it top seed Hayden Paddon and co-driver John Kennard.

A total of 91 teams are entered, from Paddon's latest specification Hyundai i20 to classic era Ford Escorts and Toyota Starlets.

One entry missing will be Dunedin's Emma Gilmour. In preparation for contesting the recent Extreme E offroad event in Italy on the weekend, Gilmour sustained a rib injury and deep bruising in a pre-event practice accident.

"It is the total opposite of everything I'd been planning and preparing for. While the accident looked serious and I spent time in hospital for observation, health comes first. The journey back home will leave no time for rest and recuperation before the rally so if I can't be my full self then experience says you don't do it," said Gilmour.

Describing the variety of teams entered, event organiser Tony McConachy says the entry list is a good reflection of the reputation of the region's roads.

"Even after all these years the Daybreaker name runs deep – as an event with fabulous roads that are a joy to drive but have plenty of challenge to them to keep you sharp," he described.

"We've forgotten how good the roads are in this part of the country and when you give people an opportunity to compete, they respond by entering. A lot of that has to do with how the Manawatu and Rangitikei Districts look after them and while the weather has done them no favours, they're still in great condition considering.

"Realising that 45% of the competitors have never done the event before gives you an idea how popular it is. To have two teams from Vanuatu, Australia and even New Caledonia – along with Scotsman Colin Clark as our presenter – that says we're really on the map."



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Hayden Paddon, Shane van Gisbergen and Raana Horan are three of the 41 entrants who will start this event for the first time.

Co-organiser Paul Fallon, a former resident, says the region's support has been the big difference at delivering an international level event from a rural location.

"We've been really impressed at how everyone in the community has worked alongside us at bringing this idea to life to deliver a Daybreaker. Right from the first conversations it was the key stakeholders like the Manawatu and Rangitikei councils and Manfeild, that took the concept seriously and showed us the right doors to open for this to happen.

"The next step was to get the competitors to register their interest - then we knew we had both pieces of the puzzle to make this work."

Fallon reflected on the news that Emma Gilmour withdrew her entry late Monday.

"To lose Emma: absolutely gutting. We know how much she was really looking forward to this and the effort she put in to not only get her schedule to line up but to also get a co-driver. We were humbled by her commitment and still hold hope there will be another time."

All teams entered will be at Feilding's Manchester Square from 5pm Friday for an autograph session. That's followed by interviews with current drivers and past winners, including Neil Allport and Joe McAndrew. The ceremonial start begins at 6pm.

Saturday morning the cars depart Feilding for the first special stage test - set to start inland of Ōhingaiti at 6:38am. The journey heads north toward Taihape for the first of two service breaks before returning south. Compounding the challenge is the 42km Geartech Sandon Block stage that is followed by the bonus points Online Stabilisers Power Stage near Kimbolton. The final test is a 10.77km course of the Central ITM Super Stage at Manfeild, from 3:30pm. Finishing teams then get to celebrate in style in front of the trackside audience.



Photo attached: Leading the field for this weekend's Daybreaker Rally, powered by Brian Green Properties is Cromwell's Hayden Paddon in the Hyundai i20N Rally 2 car. Photo: Tayler Burke.