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# **RALLY NZ RISING STARS**

Hi everybody,

Richard [Ellis] and I are competing in this weekend's Rally of New Zealand in the Rally New Zealand Rising Stars Scholarship Ford Fiesta. It will be our first opportunity to drive in the event in which I have aspired to compete from a very young age.

After a very successful opening round at Rally Otago last month, the team has a good chance to kick back and unwind. Normally I'd spend a lot of time in between events doing all the preparation on the rally cars myself, but this year as part of my scholarship package, I've received the use of a fully-maintained car. This takes all the pressure off and enables me to better prepare myself for the rally.

The event consists of three days worth of competitive stages, from Whangarei down as far south as Raglan. Until recently I used to reside in Whangarei and I'm feeling very confident that we can set some good stage times on the day one roads on which I love to drive. To finish the day off, we have a short blast around the Auckland Domain super special.

Day two stages are based throughout Franklin, the home of the late, great Possum Bourne. These stages are sure to suit our nimble little Fiesta well and I'm looking forward to steering my way through some of the best roads in the country.

Day three is further south towards Raglan with several more famous stages. Whaanga Coast is a stage I love to drive, as do many WRC drivers from around the world. Beautiful scenery and grouse roads make up Rally New Zealand and I can't wait to get into it.

The rally has three points scoring days for our National Rally Championship. We currently hold the lead in our Group N 2WD class and it will take a sensible drive to get to the finish of what is sure to be a grueling three days of competition. It is important that we score points every day at this event to maintain our lead in the championship.

Follow our progress with live results across the weekend at [www.chrissport.co.nz](http://www.chrissport.co.nz).

Bye for now,  
Stephen Barker