

Mazda Australia will unleash its brand new Mazda3 MPS race car on this year's Targa Tasmania, marking the global rally debut of the company's acclaimed New Generation performance model. One of the country's most promising rally drivers, Brendan Reeves, will take the wheel of the brand new Showroom spec rally car built by Mazda Motorsport in Australia under watchtower Allan Horsley. Rounding out Mazda's two car attack on Targa Tasmania from April 27 to May 2 is former Targa champion Steve Glenney who will return to pilot Mazda's turbo rotary sports coupe, RX8 SP.

Since its Australian launch in June last year, the New Generation Mazda3 MPS has been met with critical acclaim with the new turbo hatch sporting a racy new look and a number of engine and chassis improvements. As a standard car Mazda's popular hot hatch sports a whopping 190kW of power and 380Nm of torque, but with Targa Showroom production regulations allowing minor modifications to the car's engine management system, Mazda Motorsport Chief Horsley has been able to get even more out of its 2.3 litre Direct Injection turbocharged engine.

"The Mazda3 MPS is an incredible out of the box rally car, we've already proven that with three consecutive class wins and a tenth outright at Targa," he said. "This year we have a more refined and evolved piece of machinery that has been improved in just the right areas for rallying; suspension, transmission and torque management."

Calling the corners for Reeves is his older sister Rhianon Smyth, who is a school teacher by day. This dynamic duo has campaigned over 30 rallies together but none will be more significant than Targa, with the event marking their return to endurance rallying after a major accident at last year's Rally SA left Smyth with serious injuries.

"Rhianon and I are really excited about this year's Targa," said Reeves. "Despite last year's setbacks we're both stoked to be back in the racing seat. Rhianon, due to her incredible fitness and determination, has made a full and remarkable recovery and we both can't wait to get back to what we love doing the most – rallying. And racing at an event like Targa Tasmania for a professional racing outfit really is the pinnacle.

"Allan and the team at Mazda have spent a lot of time on developing the new car, so all of that, along with the improvements made at the factory level are going to make for a really competitive car."

Reeves and Smyth, and the Mazda3 MPS are no strangers to Targa Tasmania. Last year the pair finished third in class and the fastest 2WD Showroom car in the rally version of the superseded Mazda3 MPS.

The 2010 Targa Tasmania rally will be held from April 27 to May 2. Over the course of the five day event Mazda's rally cars will travel over 2000km including up to 500 competitive kilometres broken up over 40 closed road stages.

For news, images, video and live Targa updates during the event and to win a drive in Targa Tasmania in a Mazda3 MPS visit www.mazdamotorsport.com.au.

[Visit Brendan's Photo Gallery](#) to view the brand new Mazda3 MPS

FAST FACTS

Mazda3 MPS

Engine: Direct injection 2.3 litre turbocharged 4 cylinder

Power: 210 kW

Torque: 412 Nm

Front wheel drive

Suspension: Front: Independent MacPherson struts with coil springs

Rear: Independent multi link with low profile springs

Brakes: Front: 320mm standard Mazda ventilated discs

Rear: 280mm standard Mazda solid discs

Standard ABS and EBD

Transmission: 6 speed manual

Kerb weight: 1403kg

Fuel tank: 60 litres

Wheels: 18 inch Mazda3 MPS alloys

Tyres: Yokohama/Advan A050 built for competition use

Driver: Brendan Reeves, Wedderburn, VIC

Co-Driver: Rhianon Smyth, Ballarat, VIC