

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Monday 3 August 2009

Garland D-MAX leads class in Safari

Bruce Garland and Harry Suzuki in their Isuzu D-Max ute are the leading diesel competitor and seventh outright after Day One of the 2009 Australasian Safari, which started from Perth on the weekend and finishes 3,500 km later in Kalgoorlie next Saturday.

The first five cars are all powered by transplanted, hotted American V8s of 5.7 or six litres and the sixth is an Isuzu badged as a Frontera. Safari veteran Des Harrington led by 15 seconds over fellow Patrol driver Adrian Parker, with defending champion Steve Riley third a further five seconds back in a Pajero V8.

Garland's D-Max posted the quickest car class time in Saturday's Prologue to decide Sunday's starting order. It was held in the Mundaring forest, north-east of Perth and used some of the range of roads, from fast and flowing, to tight and narrow, made famous by the World Rally Championship round previously held in WA.

Day One saw crews travel north 575 km, including 101 km of competitive stages, to Geraldton.

"We just took it pretty easy today, just cruised basically," said Garland.

"A wise old race ace once said that if you want to finish first, first you have to finish. Today was Day One so there was no point trying to be a hero when we have another six days to go.

"The new engine is going really well, so we're pretty happy for the moment."

Garland and Suzuki, who have won the Safari five times, are using the event as preparation for the 2010 Dakar Rally, to be run again in Argentina and Chile next January. The pair finished first diesel ute and 11th outright in the long and infamously tough Dakar last January.

They finished third in last year's Safari—the event's first ever diesel podium — with the same ute they are using this year, which was the prototype for their Dakar car. It has been upgraded to match the Dakar racer ute and has also had some further suspension and diesel engine technology improvements.

Before these latest improvements, the D-Max – built in Garland's outer Sydney workshop – was putting out around 500Nm of torque, up 39 per cent on the standard engine, and 160kW of power, up 33 per cent, but Garland says it now has more torque and top-end speed. However, he's not predicting victory just yet.

NEWS RELEASE

Placings after Leg One: AUTO Division

1. Harrington/Harrington	Nissan Patrol 6-litre V8 (transplant)	1hr 19m 37s
2. Parker/McGilvray	Nissan Patrol 6-litre V8 (transplant)	+ 15 seconds
3. Riley/Doble	Mitsubishi Pajero 6-litre V8 (transplant)	+ 20 seconds
7. Garland/Suzuki	Isuzu D-MAX 3-litre turbo-diesel ute	1hr 23m 43s

Below: The Garland/Suzuki D-Max en route to fastest time on the Safari Prologue.

(photo: Australasian Safari / Brian White)

