

# Ben Hunt closes gap on New Zealand Rally Championship with second in the Southern Lights Rally



- **Just 1 point separates Ben Hunt and championship leader, Robbie Stokes mid-way through the season.**
- **Hunt's second position was hard fought with a tight battle between he and Robbie Stoke all rally**

**Auckland, New Zealand, 25 June 2024** – After a break of 20 years the Rally of Southland returned to the New Zealand Rally Championship last weekend as the Southern Lights Rally – the world's southernmost championship event.

Using 150km of competitive road section in the Southland region the event isn't easily recalled in the mind of competitors like other regular rallies on the NZRC calendar.

Ben Hunt didn't let that unfamiliarity with the event slow him, or the Škoda New Zealand Rally Team Fabia Rally2 car, as they powered to second overall.

More importantly, Hunt has narrowed the gap between he and Championship leader, Robbie Stokes to just a single point after an epic battle between the two developed over the event.

"Robbie is an awesome competitor, and I knew this was going to be a very hard battle, we were watching the timings closely and after him pipping us narrowly on SS1 through SS6, we knew we needed to dig a little deeper to secure that P2 step on the podium." Said Hunt.

Hunt and Co-Driver Tony Rawstone rose to the challenge and found the additional pace in the final three stages to edge Stokes (Stokes Motorsport Ford Fiesta AP4) by 7.9 seconds overall.

“The Škoda Fabia has been performing superbly this season and it’s a great to have confidence in the car when maximum attack is needed to get the result like we had at the Southern Lights Rally.” Said Hunt

The team will now have a mid-season break to prepare the Fabia for the back half of the NZRC which resumes with another iconic rally, the Daybreaker Rally in Palmerston North in September.

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