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Youth, international experience and a World Champion in the enduro mix for Castrol Racing

Three drivers, an eclectic mix of a fast rookie, a V8-experienced international and a World Champion, will join four-time Bathurst 1000 winner Greg Murphy in the Castrol EDGE Commodore for this year's endurance races.

V8 Supercar Rookie Tim Blanchard, Bathurst-experienced Dane Allan Simonsen and World Touring Car Champion (WTCC) Yvan Muller will drive alongside Murphy at the Phillip Island, Bathurst and Gold Coast races respectively.

Blanchard, will make his V8 'main game' debut at the L&H 500 at Phillip Island.

The 23 year old is one of Australian motor racing's brightest rising stars. He won the Australian Formula Ford Championship in 2007 before finishing runner-up in the British FFord title and claiming second in the British FFord Festival – the category's unofficial world championship – the following year.

Blanchard made his Fujitsu V8 Supercar Series debut in Adelaide earlier this year, finishing third overall.

His talent was immediately recognised by Castrol Racing team owner Paul Morris, who awarded the rookie driver a test in Murphy's Commodore at Queensland Raceway.

Blanchard's star has continued to shine brighter, scoring his first race and overall Fujitsu Series round win in Townsville recently, while he sits second in series points to Steve Owen.

Simonsen will join Murphy in the #51 Castrol EDGE Commodore for the year's biggest race, the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000.

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The 32 year old is considered one of the world's best enduro drivers with extensive Sportscar/GT and V8 Supercar experience.

Simonsen won the 2007 Australian GT Championship, the 2009 Asian Le Mans Series Championship, and has twice finished on the podium in class at Le Mans (2007/09).

In V8 Supercars, he has driven for Garry Rogers Motorsport (2003/04), Perkins Engineering (05) and Triple Eight Race Engineering (2006/07/09) finishing fifth at Bathurst with Richard Lyons in 2007.

Muller, 40, will co-drive with Murphy at the star-studded Armor All Gold Coast 600 just two weeks after Bathurst.

The Frenchman is no stranger to V8 Supercars having contested the annual enduros for the Holden Racing Team (2000), finishing tenth for HRT with Jason Plato at Bathurst, Kmart Racing (2003) and Triple Eight, winning the 2005 Sandown 500 with Craig Lowndes.

Muller is rated one of the world's greatest touring car drivers, having won the 2008 WTCC and the 2003 British Touring Car Championship. He finished second four times in the BTCC, was twice second in the WTCC, and currently leads the 2010 WTCC.

Murphy said the changing driver line-up was necessary due to the prior driver/series commitments, but he was more than happy with the team's signings.

"I think we've got a great mix of talent and made the very best of a situation where suitable co-drivers weren't available for all races," Murphy said.

"Tim is an extremely promising driver who is doing a tremendous job in the Fujitsu Series. He hasn't driven a V8 Supercar at Phillip Island before but it won't take him long to get up to speed and he is more than capable of handling the pressure.

"Allan is a great partner to have for Bathurst – he's got a lot of experience at the mountain, he has finished top five there in the past and he's a driver we can trust – he will do a great job," he said.

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“And Yvan’s record speaks for itself. He’s a World Touring Car Champion, a British Touring Car Champion, he’s won in a V8 Supercar, and he puts our team in a very good position for the Gold Coast.”

Rookie Blanchard said he was delighted to be rewarded with the drive alongside Murphy.

“I was surprised when Paul [Morris] gave me the call, but very happy too,” Blanchard said.

“Driving the Castrol EDGE Commodore with Greg Murphy is a great opportunity for me, but I can’t be carried away.

“My job at Phillip Island will be quite clear, get up to speed, do the middle stint of the race, stay on the lead lap, and hand the car back to Murph without any scratches.”

Team owner Paul Morris will join Russell Ingall in the second car out of the Paul Morris Motorsports stable, the Supercheap Auto Racing Commodore, for this year’s enduros.

The V8 Supercar Championship Series is now on an eight week hiatus before resuming with the L&H 500 at Phillip Island on 10-12 September.

Australia’s ‘Great Race’, the Supercheap Auto Bathurst 1000, takes place at Mount Panorama on 7-10 October with the Armor All Gold Coast 600 on the streets of Surfers Paradise following just two weeks later (21-24 October).

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