

The 2021 Victorian Rally Championship has concluded with the running of the Gippsland Rally on Saturday, 4 December, based out of Heyfield in Victoria's east.

After claiming 2WD honours at the previous round in November, Brendan Reeves, and co-driver Kate Catford, quickly settled into the event, setting times in their Datsun 1600 that had them in the top five of all competitors.

Heat 1 comprised a total of four stages - including two stages (30 kilometres in total) which saw the crews climb up Black Range Road and then drive down Stoney Creek Road to Heyfield. With cooler temperatures and a good road position (sixth car on the road), Reeves was able to take advantage of his favourable start position and was immediately on the pace.



With a number of this year's Victorian Rally Championship events featuring stages run at high

altitude, Reeves asked engine specialist Brad Nankervis to tune the car to run better in these conditions and he was pleased to see the efforts had paid off. He reported that there was less power loss at altitude than in previous events.

Heading into the mid-event service break, Reeves and Catford were second in the 2WD class and sitting fourth overall. They returned to the stages after a tyre change to soft Pirellis for the afternoon.

The afternoon's four stages were a repeat of the morning and with the roads now well swept of gravel, Reeves was able to increase his speed and really push. The Datsun was running faultlessly and handling as well as it had all year.

It wasn't to last, though. As the pair approached the finish line of Stage 7, the penultimate stage of the rally, the overheating warning light came on. When they checked for the cause of the problem at the completion of the stage, Reeves and Catford discovered the fan belt had broken.

Despite putting their best bush mechanic skills to the test, they couldn't restart the car and were out of the event.

