

## Solid sixth for Dowel in Heat 1 of Rally Queensland

Justin Dowel and Matt Lee have driven the Activ RallySport Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX to a solid sixth place in Heat 1 of Rally Queensland, held on the Sunshine Coast today.

The Victorian pair dropped over two minutes on the final stage of the day with rear brake problems, but still maintained their sixth place after seven hard-fought stages.

Heat 1 of Rally Queensland, round four of the Australian Rally Championship, got underway with a ceremonial start in Nambour last night, before crews began competition with seven stages today totaling 113.77km competitive.

Recent heavy rain made many of the stages slippery, and with Dowel and Lee coming off a major accident in Western Australia last month, they were content to drive at a controlled pace and maintain their fifth place in the championship race.

Determined to get the Activ RallySport Lancer to the end of the day in one piece, Dowel eased his way into the day, however he still managed two sixth best times, proving that consistency counts for a lot.

Changes to the suspension, ride height and the tyres during the day improved the handling and grip of the Lancer Evo IX, and towards the end of the day they really started to hit their straps.

“The stages were typical of Rally Queensland, quick rough and rocky, but after the heavy rain leading into the event, it was 95% dry today,” Dowel said.

“We got three punctures during recce on Thursday, and then another today, but fortunately it didn’t cost us any time. Other than that, it all went well until the last stage.”

One of the many rocky wash-aways damaged the top mount on the gearbox casing on the final test, and a loss of rear brakes then saw Dowel lose two minutes to his rivals on the 34km stage.

“The gearbox problem was exactly the same as we suffered on this event last year, and while it made lots of noise when the mounting broke, it didn’t cost us a lot of time,” Dowel added. “The brakes did, however, making driving the car a little interesting.”

After the final stage the Activ RallySport crew put in a miraculous effort, repairing the gearbox mount and replacing the brake master cylinder in the 45 minute service.

“It was touch and go for a while,” co-driver Matt Lee said. “Usually in ARC rounds we get a two hour service at the end of each day, but because this event is also a round of the Asia-Pacific Championship, we only get 45 minutes.”

“The team did a tremendous job to get everything fixed, and we have a healthy car for tomorrow’s stages. We’ve been really pleased with the car today, particularly the engine power, so we’re looking forward to another good performance tomorrow.”

Tomorrow is Mother’s Day, but that will be far from the minds of the competitors as they face a further seven stages and 114km of competitive.

## NEWS FROM OUR RIVALS

Two-time champion, Simon Evans, took a comfortable victory by over a minute in his Lancer Evo IX, well clear of the Toyota Corollas of Glen Raymond and Neal Bates. A driveshaft failure cost Bates some time, while fourth placed Eli Evans (Subaru) was in line for a better result until gearbox problems late in the day..

The local brother and sister pairing of Ryan and Rebecca Smart were fifth in their Mitsubishi, but young guns Brendan Reeves (Subaru) and Nathan Quinn (Mitsubishi) both lost time and finished out of the placings.

## Red Devil Rally Queensland

### Results after Heat 1

1. Simon Evans / Sue Evans, Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX, 1h10m55.2s
2. Glen Raymond / Matt Raymond, Toyota Corolla Sportivo, 1h12m06.9s
3. Neal Bates / Coral Taylor, Toyota Corolla S2000, 1h12m15.0s
4. Eli Evans / Chris Murphy, Subaru Impreza WRX, 1h12m50.5s
5. Ryan Smart / Rebecca Smart, Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 6, 1h13m11.8s
6. Justin Dowel / Matt Lee, Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX, 1h16m08.9s