

Brendo has finished Leg 1 of Rally Tasmania in fourth place after an excellent start to this year's Australian Rally Championship.

Returning to competition in a four wheel drive car for the first time in many months, Brendo was soon on the pace in his left hand drive Subaru Impreza WRX STi. Stage 1 was used as a warm up test, but Brendo was immediately on the pace, finishing the stage just 1.8 seconds in arrears.

SS2 "Newkesbury" was one Brendo hadn't competed on before, but again his pace was evident and he was a mere 1.5 seconds behind Neal Bates in a factory-backed Toyota Corolla S2000.

The final stage of the day, "Hellyer Gorge", was one that Brendo is very familiar with, and despite his tyres becoming a little hot, he rounded out the first day to finish in fourth place, just 6.8 seconds behind leader Bates.

"This is where I wanted to be at the end of Day 1," Brendo commented. "It was fantastic to be back in a four wheel drive car again - it is so much faster!"

"Our pacenotes worked really well today. Rhianon and I have been practising getting the notes out faster and it all went to plan."

"I've certainly got some room for improvement tomorrow and I will need to adjust my driving style a little to counter the understeer I was getting in the tighter corners, but it's all good. I am really looking forward to getting back out there again tomorrow."

Saturday's Leg 2 consists of eight stages over 116 competitive kilometres, and with another fine day forecast for north west Tasmania, Brendo and Rhianon are aiming for a top three position by the end of the day.