Brendan Reeves and Rhianon Gelsomino have had a positive start to Kennards Hire Rally Australia, finishing the day as the highest placed Australians and in 13th position overall.

Reeves, who is driving the Force Motorsport Mazda2 AP4, started the first of the day's stages with a steady approach and built his lead throughout the day to take the ASN class honours on leg 1. He sits just over two minutes ahead of his nearest ASN class competitor, Nathan Quinn.

Kennards Hire Rally Australia started with three forestry stages covering a distance of 55 kilometres, before a mid-day service. The same three stages were then repeated in the afternoon, followed by two runs of the spectacular Super Special Stage alongside Coffs Harbour jetty.

In an endurance type event like Rally Australia, tyre choice and management is critical. Reeves chose soft Pirellis for the morning loop of stages before swapping to hard tyres in the afternoon, and was very happy with the performance of the tyres.

Reeves was hoping for a close battle with Eli Evans (Mini Cooper AP4) and Harry Bates (Toyota Yaris AP4) but both were forced to retire today with mechanical issues. Fortunately for him, the Mazda2 ran faultlessly today and Reeves was happy with its set up and handling.

With rain forecast for tomorrow's leg 2, Reeves will wait until just before the start to make his tyre selection for the day. He is looking forward to the day's stages, particularly the 50 kilometre-long Nambucca stage which he has really enjoyed in previous years.

"The Nambucca stage is one of my favourites," he said. "It is a bit rough in the middle section so I'll need to take a bit more care in there, but for the rest of the stage - and the day - I'll be giving it my all."

Saturday's leg 2 of Kennards Hire Rally Australia consists of six stages covering around 135 kilometres south of Coffs Harbour, and then two more runs of the Super Special Stage at Coffs Harbour jetty.

See more photos of Brendan and Rhianon in action in their [Photo Gallery](#) .

Photo: Timo Anis