

Michael Morris and Geoff Floyd, Ross and Ashley Fraser and Chris Walter and Jamie Sargeant – all in six-cylinder Commodores – had battled all year for PR4 class honors.

On stage five the Frasers rolled out of the event, while Michael Morris and Floyd set the fourth fastest time overall, moving them up to seventh.

Local crew Chris Lowe and Chris Storer (VP Commodore V8) were forced to drive without a clutch when the cable broke, which contributed to the gearbox failing with just one stage to go.

In the PR1 category for 0-1300cc cars, Russell Hocking and Sue Brick (Datsun 120Y) finished second in class on the day behind Sam Vaughan and Greg Folletta (Suzuki Swift), although they scored enough points to win the class in the VRC.

Brian Semmens and David Leoncini had the measure of the other PR2 class crews and finished with maximum points for the third time this year, giving them the class win in the VRC and 12th overall.

Mark Roberts and Simon Ellis, Andrew Pannam and Peter Mignot and Simon and Sue Evans fought the Datsun 1600s battle. Evans and Evans, however, retired after stage five when the diff almost fell out of the car, while the others exchanged times right to the end.

At the finish Roberts and Ellis led Pannam and Mignot by 42sec and held the PR3 class lead. Darren Crozier and Sue McCreedy (Holden Gemini) were fourth in class, giving Crozier enough points to take the class in the VRC.

Peter Evans and daughter Kylie (Pulsar GTiR) finished 10th overall, 30sec behind Rob Davis and Colin Elliott (Celica GT Four).



*Morris and Floyd were first in the inaugural two-wheel-drive championship, seventh outright.*

In the Group N class Grigg and Tait and David Nutter and Roslyn Martin (Subaru WRX) swapped stage times over the whole event (they also equalled times on three stages).

Morris and Floyd held on to seventh outright at the finish to take out the PR4 class in the event and the VRC, not to mention victory in the inaugural Victorian two-wheel-drive championship.

Steve Poore and Matthew Birchall (Subaru Legacy RS-R) set the third fastest time on stage five and wrapped up sixth outright at the finish, which gave them victory in the Novice Crew section of the event and the VRC.

Danny Murphy and Ross Lilley moved up to fourth outright on stage five and remained there until a bent rear strut put them out.

Grigg and Tait finished fifth outright – their best finish yet – and took the Group N class in the VRC. Next year they will be running for outright honors in a Lancer Evo V.

Brothers Mark and Craig Rodgers (Legacy RS) bettered their North Eastern Rally result with fourth outright on their home territory.

Messer and Bruty managed to hold on to second, 12sec ahead of Pedder and Humm.

Even a fastest time on the last section for Messer and Bruty couldn't close the 24sec gap to Morris and Cole, who took outright victory in the event and first in the VRC after scoring consistent results all year.

The 1999 VRC kicks off in April with the WIN TV Rally in the Valley.

– Stephen Dunbar