

THE EIGHTIES ERA 1981 to 1990

This is called The Eighties Era although the record goes to 1995 – in fact in 1992 to 1995 the event wasn't conducted

1981 Ampol Bega Valley Rally – Round of ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1	Geoff Portman	Vic	Ross Runnalls	Vic	Datsun Stanza	4:31.21
2	Wayne Bell	NSW	Col Parry	NSW	Holden Commodore	4:41.13
3	Chris Brown	Vic	Simon Brown	Vic	Datsun 180B	4:32.06
4	Gordon Leven	NSW	Robbie Wilson	NSW	Datsun Stanza	4:52.26
5	Doug Thompson	Vic	Ron Lugg	Vic	Datsun Stanza	4:52.47
6	Ian McKenzie	NSW	Mike Harker	ACT	Datsun 1600	4:55.36

Australian Rally Championship:

Rally of the West (WA)	1. Geoff Portman (Vic)	1. Ross Runnalls (Vic)
Lutwyche Rally (Qld)	2. George Fury (Vic)	2. Monty Suffern (Vic)
Bega Valley Rally (NSW)	3. Ross Dunkerton (WA)	3. Jeff Beaumont (Vic)
Akados Rally (Vic)	4. Wayne Bell (NSW)	4. Col Parry (NSW)
Alpine Rally (Vic)	5. Chris Brown (Vic)	5. Simon Brown (Vic)
	6. Doug Thompson (Vic)	6. Ron Lugg (Vic)

At the end of the 1980 rally year Ford and Holden withdrew their factory teams, leaving Nissan on its own. Having won six titles in seven years, and unbeaten in events in 1979 and 1980, Nissan downscaled its involvement to mount a low-key factory effort and supported privateers, by providing the single-cam engine instead of the twin-cam one used in previous years in its works cars. Portman and Runnalls were supported by Nissan and they won four rounds to clinch the championship title – the most decisive win for many years. Dunkerton, with Beaumont, won the fifth round but finished third in the championship, behind George Fury and Monty Suffern.



During the tumultuous battle between the CAMS Group G and Group A concepts in the early eighties, the BVR wasn't conducted as a round of the Championship between 1981 and 1985, but rejoined in 1986 when local lad David Eadie dominated with wins in 1986, 1987 and 1988 in the Group G Datsun 1600 and then the Group A Mazda 323 4WD.

1982 Bega Valley Rally – not a round of the ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
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Australian Rally Championship:

Lutwyche Rally (Qld)	1. Geoff Portman (Vic)	1. Ross Runnalls (Vic)
Sunday Times Safari (WA)	2. Greg Carr (ACT)	2. Fred Goentas (ACT)

Dunlop 2GO (NSW)	3. Doug Thompson (Vic)	3. Ron Lugg (Vic)
Broken Hill Rally (SA)	4. Tony Masling (NSW)	4. Geoff Jones (NSW)
Alpine Rally (Vic)	5. Ed Mulligan (NSW)	5. Col Parry (NSW)
	6. Wayne Bell (NSW)	6. Steve Ellis (NSW)

Nissan effectively pulled out of the sport at the end of 1981, and supported a few privateers when the Bluebird Turbo failed to materialise. Portman developed a twelve year old Datsun 1600 into the famed 'Grunter Mk11' and took off four rounds to again win the championship convincingly. Greg Carr, through Caroline O'Shanasy, surprised everyone by competing in an ex-factory Fiat Abarth, and finished all rounds. In fact, Carr won the first round in Queensland when the Grunter failed to finish, and then was second three times.



1983 Bega Valley Rally – not a round of the ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
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Australian Rally Championship:

Sunday Times Safari (WA)	1. Ross Dunkerton (WA)	1. Geoff Jones (NSW)
James Hardie National (Qld)	2. Peter Johnson (NSW)	2. Kate Hobson (Officer) (Vic)
Dunlop 2GO (NSW)	3. David Officer (Vic)	3. Phil Bonsor (NSW)
Alpine Rally (Vic)	4. Ian Hill (NSW)	4. David Kortlang (Qld)
	5. Russel Worthington (Qld)	5. Gary Kabel (Qld)
	6. Caronile O'Shanesy (NSW)	6. Meg Davis (Qld)

LET THE FIGHT BEGIN!! 1983 saw the introduction of Group A cars into rallying, following in the wake of circuit racing in 1982.

Group A was the new category for near-standard cars and produced arguments (including fisticuffs at times), protests, controversy and little competition, but it was the pointer to the future and was the only way that factory teams/support was going to be enticed back into the sport. Production Rally Cars (PRC) was also introduced – so, with Group G, there were three vehicle categories.

Ross Dunkerton won the championship ("I sleezed it in") – his fifth – using three different cars and two navigators, but it was a deserved reward for a year of grit and determination – as well as cunning at the end of the season when he quite dramatically switched from Group G to Group A (Commodore) in order to take advantage of the lesser number of Group A competitors to gain second place and 20 points. Competitors running in Group A and PRC/Group G each scored 24, 20, 15, 12, etc for placings – however, as there were fewer Group A competitors the opportunity to finish higher in the list was greater.



Dunkerton, with David Kortlang, in THAT Commodore that clinched his fifth title.

1984 Bega Valley Rally – not a round of the ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1						
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4						
5						
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Australian Rally Championship:

Canon Zodiac (Vic)	1. David Officer (Vic)	1. Kate Officer (Vic)
Bathurst (NSW)	2. Ed Mulligan (NSW)	2. Geoff Jones (NSW)
James Hardie National (Qld)	3. Greg Carr (ACT)	3. Fred Gocentas (ACT)
Sunday Times Safari (WA)	4. Murray Coote (Qld)	4. Iain Stewart (Qld)
Dunlop 2GO (NSW)	5. Jim Middleton (NSW)	5. Phil Bonsor (NSW)
Alpine (Vic)	6. Ian Hill (NSW)	6. Garry Marshall (NSW)

David and Kate Officer (who started the year as 'Hobson') added some fresh names to the Australian Rally Championship honour roll with their very popular victory in 1984 in their Mitsubishi Galant. In doing so Kate became the very first woman to win a CAMS national motorsport championship. It was a strange and difficult year, which saw rallying wandering in the motorsport wilderness, with no sign of revival in manufacturer interest and competitors trying to decide on whether to take up Group A (PRC) or not. Several top drivers of the year competed in cars in both categories.

1984 May have been the Officers' year, but there is no doubting the fastest driver in the series was Greg Carr, with Fred Gocentas, in the Fiat 131 Abarth. They won two rounds but were plagued with mechanical problems with the Fiat. With equal points for both Group G and PRC Ed Mulligan cunningly decided to have a go at the championship driving a PRC Mazda RX7 and won the first three rounds. In an attempt to hold back Mulligan Carr, in round 4, competed in a Holden Commodore to beat Mulligan, who finished second.

So, with the dual points system the Officers' win was all the more meritorious.



1985 Bega Valley Rally – Round of ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1	Hugh Bell	Vic	Steve Ellis	Vic	Mazda RX7	190.33
2	Ron McKinnon	NSW	David Kelley	NSW	Datsun 1600	194.46
3	John Atkinson	NSW	Geoff Jones	NSW	Subaru RX Turbo	194.48

4	Mark Hankinson	NSW	Steve Owers	NSW	Datsun 1600	195.01
5	Ian Hill	NSW	Phillip Bonser	NSW	Ford Escort RS	195.35
6	Barry Lowe	SA	Kevin Pedder	SA	Subaru RX Turbo	195.38



Australian Rally Championship:

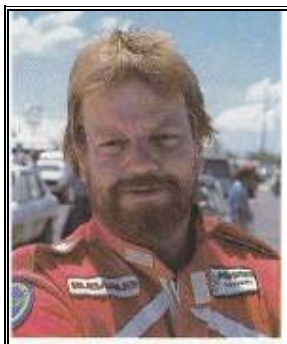
Fairford Stages (Tas)	1. Barry Lowe (SA)	1. Kevin Pedder (SA)
Western Mail Rally (WA)	2. Hugh Bell (Vic)	2. Steve Ellis (Vic)
Bega Valley Rally (NSW)	3. Peter Clark (NSW)	3. Wayne Kenny (NSW)
Keema Classic Rally (QLd)	=4. Brian Smith (Vic)	=4. Ray Temple (NSW)
Tile Supplies Rally (SA)	=4. Ron Cremen (NSW)	=4. David McKenzie (Vic)
Akademus Rally (Vic)	6. Graham Alexander (Vic)	6. Jon Thompson (NSW)

1985 will go down in Australian Rally Championship history as the year when the Group A category finally got off the ground, as several of the serious ARC contenders switched to the new category. The championship reverted to one scoring system.

In a crafty marketing move Subaru imported some four-wheel drive RX turbo cars and provided them at subsidised price to some top privateers and sat back and watched the results come in. Barry Lowe and Peter Clark took up the offer and used their Subarus to good effect, with Lowe winning the championship against the flying RX7 of Hugh Bell.

1985 was the year that saw Tasmania gain a round of the ARC, which now meant that the series was conducted in all states.

It was strange but transition year – no Carr, no Mulligan no Officer, no Portman; but it did see new faces appear come to the fore in the series - Andrew Murfett (Tas), Brian Smith (Vic), Rob Herridge (WA), David Eadie (NSW), Murray Coote (QLd), Ed Ordynski (SA).



1986 Bega Valley Rally – Round of ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1	David Eadie	NSW	Chris Shearer	NSW	Datsun 1600	223.56
2	Ron McKinnon	NSW	Steve Owers	NSW	Datsun 1600	223.59
3	Greg Carr	ACT	Fred Gocentas	ACT	Alfa Romeo GTV-6	224.53
4	David Officer	Vic	Kate Officer	Vic	Mitsubishi Starion	226.05
5	John Atkinson	NSW	Jim Gleeson	NSW	Subaru RX Turbo	226.19
6	Peter Glennie	NSW	Coral Taylor	NSW	Subaru RX Turbo	229.48



David Eadie – Datsun 1600

Australian Rally Championship:

Rally of Tasmania (Tas)	1. Barry Lowe (SA)	1. Kate Officer (Vic)
GWM Forest Rally (WA)	2. David Officer (Vic)	2. Mark Stacey (SA)
Bega Valley Rally (NSW)	3. Andrew Murfett (Tas)	3. Tony Jackson (NSW)
Keema Classic Rally (Qld)	4. Peter Glennie (NSW)	4. Coral Taylor (NSW)
Tile Supplies Rally (SA)	5. Greg Carr (ACT)	5. Fred Gocentas (ACT)
Alpine Rally (Vic)		

Group A so dominated the 1986 rally year that Group G only won two rounds of the series. The championship again went to Barry Lowe, with a new Subaru, who proved that that his 1985 win was no fluke, as was suggested by some of the critics who considered he was not a deserving champion in 1985 – Lowe silenced the critics by proving them wrong. David Officer contested the series in a Mitsubishi Starion Turbo, starting the season slowly but working up to a great, and popular, win in the last round Alpine Rally. Kate went on to win her second national navigating championship, as Mark Stacey did not navigate for Lowe for the entire season.

1986 saw the introduction of another manufacturer – Mazda – with its 323 4WD. At the hands of Andrew Murfett and Murray Coote the little car showed great promise for the future.

1987 Bega Valley Rally – Round of ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1	David Eadie	NSW	Jeff Jones	NSW	Mazda 323 4WD	287.47
2	Wayne Bell	NSW	David Boddy	NSW	Toyota Corolla Levin	290.11
3	Greg Carr	ACT	Fred Gocentas	ACT	Alfa Romeo GTV-6	291.40
4	Ed Ordynski	SA	Greg Preece	Tas	Subaru RX Turbo	307.57
5	Jim Middleton	NSW	Dayle Payne	NSW	Holden Commodore	316.20
6	Geoff Maquire	NSW	Patrick Caey	NSW	Ford Escort RS2000	319.45



David Eadie – Mazda 323 4WD

Australian Rally Championship:

Rally of Tasmania (Tas)	1. Greg Carr (ACT)	1. Fred Gocentas (ACT)
GWM Forest Rally (WA)	2. Wayne Bell (NSW)	2. David Boddy (NSW)
Bega Valley Rally (NSW)	3. Ed Ordynski (SA)	3. Greg Preece (SA)
Keema Classic Rally (Qld)	4. Ian Hill (NSW)	4. Phil Bonser (NSW)
Tile Supplies Rally (SA)	5. David Eadie (NSW)	5. Jeff Jones (NSW)
Alpine Rally (Vic)		

1987 was a surprise in that the winners reverted to the 'old' guard – Greg Carr and Wayne Bell – driving two-wheel drive cars, against the coming might of the four-wheel drive cars. Between them they were placed first, second and third on three occasions in each place. It is fair to say, however, that Bell changed to a 323 to win one round towards the end of the season.

Car, driving the delicate Alfa Romeo GTV-6 which had given him so many problems the previous year; now, with the bugs ironed out, Carr once again turned it on for his legion of fans.

1987 also saw a mixed bag of marques – Audi, Alfa Romeo, Daihatsu, Holden, Honda, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Subaru, Toyota,



1988 Bega Valley Rally – Round of ARC

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1	David Eadie	NSW	Chris Shearer	NSW	Mazda 323 4WD	2:55:42
2	Mark Roach	Qld	Mark Price	Qld	Mazda 323 4WD	2:58:27
3	Greg Carr	ACT	Fred Gocentas	ACT	Alfa Romeo GTV-6	2:58:33
4	Murray Coote	Qld	Iain Stewart	Qld	Mazda 323 4WD	2:59:00
5	Eric Pietila	Qld	Mike Rebbechi	Qld	Mazda 323 4WD	3:01:14
6	Mark Tolcher	SA	David Tolcher	SA	Subaru RX Turbo	3:03:58



David Eadie – Mazda 323 4WD

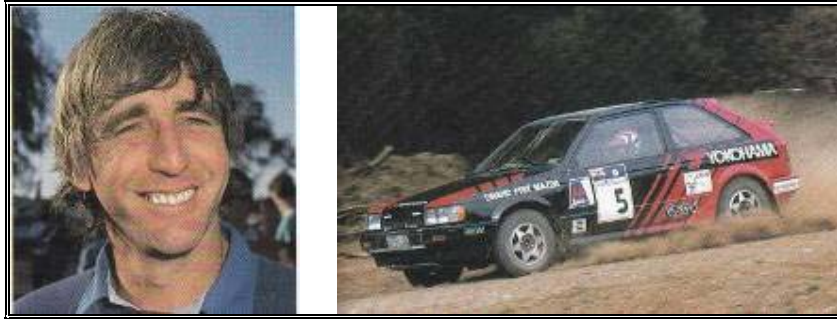
Australian Rally Championship:

Rally of Tasmania (Tas)	1. Murray Coote (Qld)	1. Iain Stewart (Qld)
Forest Rally (WA)	2. Greg Carr (ACT)	2. Fred Gocentas (ACT)
Bega Valley Rally (NSW)	3. David Eadie (NSW)	3. Chris Shearer (NSW)
Rally of Australia (ACT)	4. Wayne Bell (NSW)	4. Dave Boddy (NSW)
	5. Pat Barber (Vic)	5. Simon Brown (Vic)
	6. Mark Roach (Qld)	6. Mark Price (Qld)

Only four rounds were included in the year. Rally of Australia was a last minute replacement for the Queensland round, and the Alpine Rally, was allocated to be conducted in April, as the organisers had entered the event on the FIA calendar and requested this date. These plans fell over so the Alpine was not included.

Only Group A and PRC vehicles were eligible for the series. Group G were out after a long fight, although PRC gradually became modified closer and closer to Group G as the coming years evolved. In 1988, for the first time since it was suspended in 1977 due to the increasing development of Group G, CAMS recognised the Vehicle Manufacturer Championship.

One of the country's most underrated drivers, Murray Coote, won the 1988 Championship – the year when only Group A and PRC vehicles were eligible for the series. Group G were out after a long fight, although PRC gradually became modified closer and closer to Group G as the coming years evolved. Coote, in a new Mazda 323 4WD, and with Iain Stewart navigating, lead the championship from the first round in Tasmania and went into the final round – the Alpine – equal with Greg Carr, and emerged the winner.



1989 Bega Valley Rally

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
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6						

1990 Bega Valley Rally

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

1991 Bega Valley Rally

Place	Driver	State	Navigator	State	Make/Model	Time
1						
2						
3						
4						
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1992 to 1995
Not conducted