

2019 FIA World Rally Championship
Round 14/14: Kennards Hire Rally Australia

2019 FIA WRC titles for Michelin
***Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT claims maiden Manufacturers’
crown***

As teams arrived in New South Wales earlier this week for the 2019 Rally Australia, the stakes were different to those that were at play when the same fixture was the 2018 FIA World Rally Championship’s curtain-closer. At the same time last year, both the Drivers’ and Manufacturers’ titles were still up for grabs, with M-Sport’s Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Ford Fiesta WRC, now Citroën C3 WRC) just three points clear of Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai i20 Coupé WRC). The French pair went on to claim their sixth straight crown...

This season, Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja (Toyota Yaris WRC) wrapped up the Drivers’ fight in Spain, on October 27, which meant all eyes in Australia were going to be on the battle for the top Manufacturers’ prize between Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT and Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT who were split by 18 points with 43 available.

Due to the wildfires that have devastated large swathes of Australian bush and forest in recent days, however, that battle failed to materialise and the classification remained as it stood before the trip out to the southern hemisphere. The catastrophic circumstances initially prompted the organisers to reduce its originally-planned route (1,084km, including 324.53km against-the-clock) by two-thirds. But as the situation in the Coffs Harbour region worsened, they had no choice but to cancel their event altogether for obvious safety reasons. Following this decision, the WRC promoter channelled its resources into assisting the local firefighters and providing what help it could to the local population.

“It is naturally sad not to have been able to conclude the championship as planned, but the organisers clearly took the correct decision,” says **Arnaud Rémy**, the manager of Michelin’s rally programmes. “Nature’s forces can be harsh and extreme in Australia and we saw that for ourselves as smoke from the fires drifted over Coffs Harbour, leading to the evacuation of some of its population. The WRC family consequently made its logistical resources and manpower available to the police and firefighters, while crews made personal donations to local organisations to play their part in helping out.

“Aside from the catastrophic events we witnessed in Australia, I would like to congratulate Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT on winning its first FIA WRC Manufacturers’ title after giving its all throughout the season. Along with the Drivers’ crown that Ott Tänak secured in Spain, the 2019 campaign has added two more titles to Michelin’s record, while this year’s WRC2 honours have gone to France’s Pierre-Louis Loubet whose Skoda Fabia R5 competed on Michelin tyres.”





Michelin's staff for the 2019 Rally Australia comprised 10 people who all made it safely to Sydney for their flight home to Clermont-Ferrand in France.

With the 2019 FIA World Rally Championship now over, Michelin's partners and teams are turning their focus to next year's series which will kick off on January 23, 2020, with the Rallye Monte-Carlo.



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