



2024 RIDER GUIDE



@MSGONGRIDE

#MSGONGRIDE



THANK YOU

FOR JOINING US ON THE 2024 MS GONG RIDE – THE RIDE TO FIGHT MS

Welcome to the 2024 MS Gong Ride.

Since 1981, this iconic ride has inspired an incredible community of participants, supporters, donors, and volunteers who together have raised over \$46 million to help Fight MS. You are now part of this incredible legacy.

MS Plus is the leader of supportive care for people living with multiple sclerosis and has committed to the development of four state-of-the-art MS Wellbeing Centres in New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria. The MS Plus Wellbeing Centre in Lidcombe, Sydney is scheduled to open in late 2024. These state-of-the-art centres will offer a comprehensive range of services providing a complete wellbeing service model, helping people with MS achieve their personal goals and live to their fullest potential.

Every week more than 10 Australians are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and the average age of diagnosis is just 30 years old. By taking part in the ride, you are supporting people living with MS to continue to access vital support and services that help them live well, while contributing to medical research aimed at improving treatments for MS and ultimately, finding a cure.

Thank you for joining this amazing group of cyclists, who want to make an impact on the lives of Australians living with MS. It is your support and dedication that ensures no one has to face MS alone, no matter what stage of their journey, while the search for a cure continues.

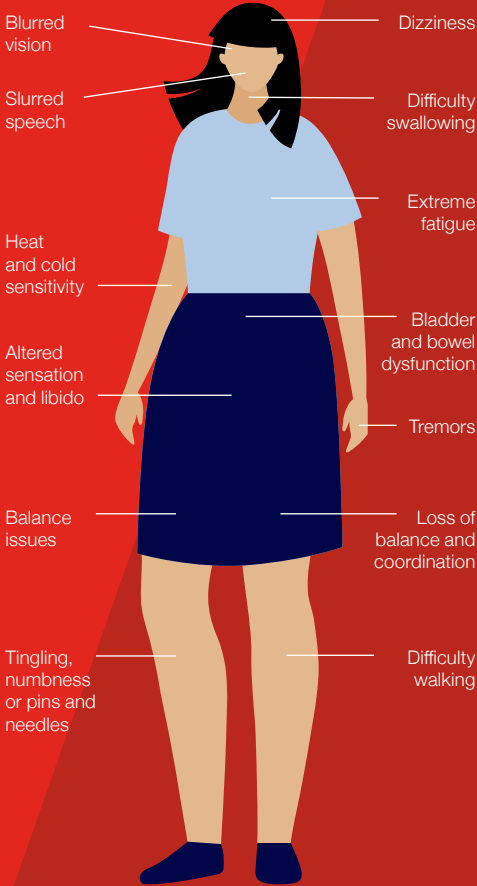
We are delighted to have you onboard, for this unforgettable and important ride to Fight MS.



John Blewonski
Chief Executive Officer
MS Plus

WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

Some symptoms of multiple sclerosis:



Multiple sclerosis is a lifelong disease for which there is no known cure.



1 in 3 Australians will be directly impacted through a diagnosed family member, friend or colleague.



No two cases of multiple sclerosis are identical. The visible and invisible symptoms of multiple sclerosis vary from person to person.



The average age of diagnosis is between 30 years of age, although children as young as 10 have been diagnosed.



Multiple sclerosis attacks the central nervous system (the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves).



Multiple sclerosis is the most common neurological condition among young people.



3 out of 4 people living with multiple sclerosis are women.

ABOUT THE MS GONG RIDE

Congratulations on entering the MS Gong Ride – the iconic Ride to Fight MS!

Thank you for taking up the challenge to complete Australia's most respected community bike ride. For more than 40 years, tens of thousands of cyclists have hit the pavement in this legendary ride, in support of people with multiple sclerosis. By fundraising, you will be committing to make sure over 33,000 Australians are supported on their journey to fight MS.

More than ever, your support is critical to ensure that no one faces MS alone.

The mission of MS Plus is to provide essential services that help people live well with MS, including Employment Support, Occupational Therapy, Personal Training and Exercise Programs, as well as Peer Support Groups. These services are provided face-to-face, via video conference or by phone.

A host of other supports continue to be available remotely, including Plus Advisor which provides free, expert advice from qualified nurses and social workers, and our free helpline, Plus Connect, which is available 5 days a week to people living with MS, their friends, family and carers.

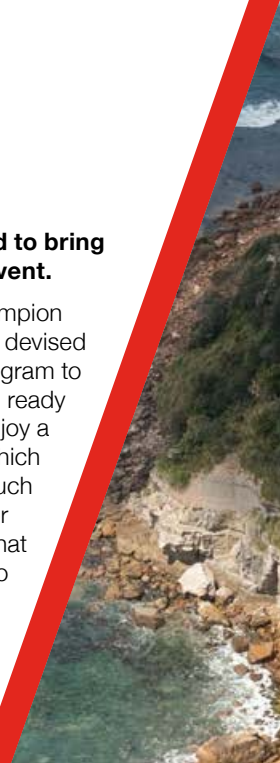
It is thanks to YOU that these vital services are possible, and no one has to face MS alone. Thank you! We can't do it without you.

This year we're excited to bring back features to the event.

Brad McGee, World Champion and Olympic Cyclist, has devised a specialised training program to keep you in top form and ready for Event Day. You will enjoy a new fundraising portal which you can customise as much as you like. Stay tuned for new cycling challenges that will inspire, great prizes to reward fundraising and much more! We are excited to have you onboard for the MS Gong Ride 2024!

"On a good day, the MS Gong Ride has to be counted among Sydney's finest events. The opportunity to ride a bike all the way to Wollongong fully supported is a wonderful experience that riders will remember forever. Couple this with the fact that you are making a massive difference for people living with MS and raising awareness for the struggles they face makes the whole show so worthwhile for every participant whether a rider, volunteer, or supporter."

Aaron Taylor, Team MICH



KICK START YOUR FUNDRAISING

Your entry fee covers the cost of running this epic event. With these top tips, you'll be sure to pass the minimum goal of raising \$350 to help people fight MS.



Share on social media
@MSGongRide #MSGongRide



Ask your employer
about matched giving



Check out our
[downloadable resources](#)



Create a Facebook
Fundraiser



Set your fundraising goal
and donate to yourself



Share why you are riding
on your page



Send emails



Upload your photo
or an avatar

Our favourite tip

Lead the way and make
the first donation to
your fundraising page.

Did you know 50% of donations come from email?!

We have email templates to
help you on your fundraising
portal. Email your friends,
family and colleagues today.

All your fundraising efforts, however large or small, are appreciated!

Create a Facebook Fundraiser directly from your fundraising page!

Your Facebook Fundraiser will be linked back to your fundraising page so all donations through Facebook will be recorded. It's a new way to smash your fundraising goal.

Are you with us?

It's easy to do! Simply visit your fundraising page and click the "Create a Facebook Fundraiser" button under your name in your fundraising dashboard.

It takes just two clicks to set up!

Fun fact

By creating a Facebook Fundraiser you will raise 15% more!



SET UP A FACEBOOK FUNDRAISER



DOUBLE YOUR DONATIONS WITH MATCHED GIVING

How do I find out about my company's policy?

Your Human Resources Department will know whether your company matches money raised by their employees or has a program that supports the charitable causes of its employees. Tell HR about the distance of the ride, the number of members in your team and what you hope to achieve. For example, every \$250 raised pays for an Plus Nurse Advisor to visit a person living with MS through the crisis of a relapse.

How do I ask?

The most engaging way to ask is to do so in person. If that's not possible, send an email. We have a template prepared on the website that you can share with your employer that details the event, your request and the benefits to the company of supporting your team. Download it [here](#).

Other options

If your company does not match funding, they may pay for registrations, donate to the team, pay for a custom team jersey or full kit, or for the BBQ and catering on event day!

Please contact MS Events for any documentation required, including tax-deductible receipts, or a letter of thanks.

Questions?

We're here to help, contact the MS Events Team on **1300 733 690** or email events@ms.org.au

For matched giving our company details are:

MS Plus ABN 66 004 942 287



TOP 5 FUNDRAISING IDEAS & INSPIRATION

Whether you're planning on hosting a small fundraising event or bringing together a virtual crowd, below are our top ideas to raise funds this year.

1



FACEBOOK FUNDRAISING

Just want to fundraise online? Create a Facebook Fundraiser with one simple click in your Gong Ride Dashboard. Most people who use Facebook Fundraiser receive their first donation within 24 hours and raise 10% more!

2



AFTER WORK DRINKS

Great opportunity to tell colleagues what you're doing. Charge an entry fee for Friday night drinks or ask for a donation in lieu of your colleague buying you a drink or few!

3



FOOD, FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!

Whether it's a BBQ, bake sale, dinner party or a cooking lesson - everyone loves to eat! Feed your friends, family and colleagues in exchange for a donation.

4



JERSEY SPONSORSHIP

Reach out to local businesses and see who wants to support your fundraising efforts. In return you can pay it forward and wear their logo with pride.

5



SET UP A BAD HABITS JAR

At home, or at work, you will be surprised how quickly a jar can fill up!

If you would like help setting up any of these fundraising ideas or have your own fundraising ideas you would like help exploring – we'd love to hear from you.

Please remember to register your fundraising event with us.

We'll promptly provide your authority to fundraise and some resources to complement your event!

Call **1300 733 690**

Email **events@ms.org.au**





MEET YOUR FUNDRAISING COACH JIMENA

Your fundraising coach is here to help you succeed and reach your fundraising goal to fight MS! Ask Jimena about:

- Personalised fundraising tips
- MS branded merchandise
- Setting up your team
- Ordering a custom jersey or kit
- Organising a fundraising activity
- Matched giving and much more!

Questions? Contact us

The MS Events Team will be able to answer any questions you have relating to the event – from operations to merchandise, volunteering or fundraising. Be sure to contact us if you require any assistance.

Call **1300 733 690**

Email events@ms.org.au

MEET YOUR CYCLING COACH BRAD MCGEE

Over the page you'll find your exclusive 2024 MS Gong Ride six week training program, developed by the legend himself Brad McGee, Australian Olympic Coach and Australian Olympic Gold Medalist.

Keep an eye out for more expert advice, including videos, direct to your inbox on topics such as:

- Endurance training
- Skills training, such as climbing, pacing, balance and cornering
- Off bike training
- Motivational and wellness guidance
- Nutritional advice and more



MS GONG RIDE – 6 WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

Ride Better with Brad McGee, Australian Olympic Gold Medallist
and Australian Olympic Coach

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
WEEK 1							Total: 4.5 hrs riding
Skills Focus	Be ready	S1, S2, S3	S6	S1, S2, S3	Off Massage	Endurance + S6	S1, S2, S3
Riding Time	Off	30mins	30mins	30mins	Off	2hrs	1hr
Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30mins			Activation 15mins	
WEEK 2							Total: 6 hrs riding
Skills Focus		S1, S2, S3	S6	S1, S2, S3		Endurance + S6	S1, S2, S3
Riding Time	Off	30mins	30mins	1hr	Off	2.5hrs	1.5hrs
Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30mins		Massage	Activation 15mins	
WEEK 3							Total: 7 hrs riding
Skills Focus		S4, S5	S6	S4, S5		Endurance + S6, S9, S10	S7
Riding Time	Off	30mins	1hr	30mins	Off	3hrs	2hrs
Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30mins		Massage	Activation 15mins	

HALF WAY

Skills Focus Legend

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| S1 Starting off | S6 Pacing |
| S2 Stopping and Obstacles | S7 Out of the Seat |
| S3 Pedaling ITS | S8 Climbing |
| S4 Hand Positions | S9 Following |
| S5 Balance and Cornering | S10 Stretch |

Endurance

Target Heart Rate 75% MHR

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
WEEK 4							Total: 9 hrs riding
Skills Focus		S4, S5	Endurance + S6, S7, S8	S4, S5		Endurance + S6, S9, S10	S7
Riding Time	Off	1hr	1.5 hrs	30mins	Off	4hrs	2hrs
Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30mins		Massage	Activation 15mins	
WEEK 5							Total: 8 hrs riding
Skills Focus		S7, S8	Recovery	S7, S8		Rehearsal Endurance + S6, S8, S9, S10	Relax & enjoy recovery ride
Riding Time	Off	30mins	30mins	30mins	Off	4.5hrs	2hrs
Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30mins		Massage	Activation 15mins	
WEEK 6							Total: 3 hrs + MS Gong Ride
Skills Focus		S1, S2, S3	S4, S5, S7	S8, S9, S10	Bike, nutrition and clothing READY for Sunday Gong Ride	Rest	Enjoy the MS Gong Ride. You've got this!
Riding Time	Off				Off	None or very easy 30 mins spin	
Off Bike	Mindfulness / yoga		Stretch 30mins		Massage	Switch Off	

Skills Focus Legend

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| S1 Starting off | S6 Pacing |
| S2 Stopping and Obstacles | S7 Out of the Seat |
| S3 Pedaling ITS | S8 Climbing |
| S4 Hand Positions | S9 Following |
| S5 Balance and Cornering | S10 Stretch |

Endurance

Target Heart Rate 75% MHR



MEET DAMIEN YOUNG

He's back this year with his team, the Young Guns – legends who together have fundraised over \$148,000 since 2009!

This year will be extra special with Damien's son Sam, joining him on the ride.

He has been eager to do it since he was two years old.

"My wife and kids have been at the start and end of every ride since before he was born - they've been the anchor for the whole thing. He has been counting down the years until he can sign up, and he is very excited. He understands the reason for the ride and knows that he has the power to help a lot of people."

Damien has taken part in the MS Gong Ride for 14 of the last 15 years and is excited to ride again this year, after being diagnosed with MS at just 26 years old.

MS often strikes people in the prime of their lives when they are busy building careers and families.



Damien says, “I was initially referred to the neurologist because I had significant facial twitching, and my vision wasn’t right. I returned after I lost sensation in my feet. I had walked over oyster shells and when I got out of the water my feet were bleeding. I had no idea because I couldn’t feel the bottom of my feet. It was scary. I was young - only 26 when I was diagnosed, and I still had my whole life ahead of me.”

“I was lucky to be included in a trial for a new treatment 12 months after I was diagnosed as the treatment that I had been on failed to slow the progression of the disease and I’d relapsed three times in a year.

“Since that time, I haven’t relapsed again. I suffer from numbness in my feet, optic neuritis, muscle aches and I fatigue easily. My face twitches resulting in increased muscle tone on one side. These symptoms are made significantly worse when I am hot, stressed or run-down.”

Damien says, “I started doing the MS Gong Ride the year after my diagnosis. I’ve always been aware of how lucky I am to be able to participate and wanted to do everything that I could for those who haven’t been as lucky.

“In 2009, when I signed up for my first Gong Ride, I didn’t comprehend the role that it would play in my life. It has improved it a hundred-fold. It has shown me what I am capable of, it has made me grateful for the hand I have been dealt, and it has shown me the overwhelming support that I have from those around me, especially my wife Georgie and my children.

“The example it has allowed me to set for my children has been another unexpected benefit. I am so proud of the drive, empathy, and generosity that this is teaching them.”

The ride can be difficult for Damien. “The heat impacts me pretty seriously and I manage my exposure as best I can through the use of an ice vest, and regular breaks. It really helps keep my core temperature down. Starting the ride at Engadine also helps to make the ride more manageable.”

What Damien loves most about the ride is the sense of accomplishment, atmosphere and opportunity to be a part of something greater than himself.

There is always a huge sense of achievement getting out of the National Park and seeing the view down from Bald Hill. The climb out of the National Park is the most gruelling part and crossing the finish line then enjoying the vibe at the finish village is always a highlight”

“It’s a fantastic day.”

“MS can impact anybody. It can come on young – that’s the thing many people don’t understand. There’s a lot of stigma around it and it’s unpredictable. There’s no prognosis.”



THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

One in three Australians will be directly impacted by multiple sclerosis through a family member, friend or colleague. The uncertainty of what lies ahead after diagnosis can be a difficult experience, and that's why we are here to make sure no one faces MS alone. Here's how your fundraising will make a difference in 2024 to fight MS.



This year, people will reach out over 17,740 times to Plus Connect, and be met with a caring person to listen and help them – whatever stage of their journey. The gateway to living well with MS, our free helpline provides information and advice, and links people to MS services. Plus Connect helps from diagnosis to living well with MS and is free to access for people living with MS, their family members, carers and healthcare professionals.



People living with MS will receive over 1,493 hours of specialised advice from caring nurses, occupational therapists and social workers through Plus Advisor. Without a long waiting list or needing to travel, Plus Advisor helps people with MS wherever they are. Accessible expert consultation is available for free to support people living with MS in areas including diagnosis, treatment options, symptom management and mental health.



Over 3,885 people will participate in Plus Education webinars and events to better understand MS. Online and face-to-face programs are available for free to educate people with MS, their carers and healthcare professionals. Plus Education shares the latest evidence-based, accurate information on everything from understanding multiple sclerosis, to living well and managing unpredictable symptoms.



Plus Peer Support provides over 690 hours of support and social connection for people living with MS and their loved ones by phone, online and in-person in 8 languages. Plus Peer Support groups help people with MS, their family, friends and carers receive free practical and emotional support through facilitated discussions.



WELLBEING CENTRES

Development of three state-of-the-art MS wellness centres in New South Wales and Victoria. The MS Plus Wellbeing Centre in Lidcombe, Sydney is scheduled to open in late 2024. These state-of-the-art centres will offer a comprehensive range of services providing a complete wellbeing service model, helping people with MS achieve their personal goals and live to their fullest potential.



MS RESEARCH

Providing funding which will help bring new treatments closer to reality, with more money to be invested in areas such as enhancing the brains defences against MS as well as protecting against or repairing myelin damage in order to restore function that has been lost for people with progressive forms of the disease and provide therapeutic options for them.



GET REWARDED

In 2024, your fundraising can unlock exclusive Event Day perks!

Whilst the biggest reward for fundraising is knowing that you are making a difference to people living with multiple sclerosis, we like to celebrate your amazing efforts and say THANK YOU by giving you a little something extra! [Terms and conditions apply](#)

KICK START YOUR FUNDRAISING

DONATION OF \$20 OR MORE

Simply make your own donation of \$20 or more through your fundraising page to help Australia living with multiple sclerosis **and a limited-edition 2024 MS Gong Ride Buff will be all yours!**



BUFF

RAISE \$250 AND RIDE FOR GOOD

\$250 could pay for an MS Nurse to support a person living with MS and their family through the crisis of worsening MS

Unlock exclusive Event Day benefits including Express Lane at Bib Collection, Bag Drop and Pick Up PLUS get served first at the Public Bar at the Finish Village **and receive these limited-edition Ride for Good Cycling Socks to rock on your ride!**



SOCKS

RAISE \$1,000 AND RIDE FOR CHANGE

Receive all of the Ride for Good perks PLUS be the first to cross the Start Line in your wave, get your Event Bib posted to you pre-event, access the fully catered and licensed VIP MS Retreat on Event Day **and receive this limited-edition Ride for Change T-Shirt to wear with pride!**



RIDE FOR CHANGE T-SHIRT

FIND OUT MORE

Raise over \$2,500 and become an MS Gong Fundraising Hero! You'll be rewarded with one of these awesome jerseys after the MS Gong Ride.



BRONZE JERSEY

\$2,500 RAISED



SILVER JERSEY

\$5,000 RAISED



GOLD JERSEY

\$10,000 RAISED



RUBY JERSEY

\$20,000 RAISED

GET INTO GEAR!

The 2024 MS Gong Ride Merchandise range is here! Celebrate this iconic event in one of these awesome event jerseys or T-Shirts.



\$89

2024 Event Jersey



\$32

2024 Event Hoodie



\$32

2024 Event T-shirt

Order by **Friday 20 Sept** to receive your gear and look the part in time for the event.

Get your gear on our website now!

BUY NOW

All event merchandise is Made to Order and final sale. We are unable to cancel, change, exchange, return or refund your order after it has been placed.



Please carefully check the sizing charts and "how to measure" guide before placing your order. Hillbrick jerseys tend to be a smaller fit than other cycling jerseys. If you are unsure, or are in between sizes, go up a size. See our sizing chart at: shop.ms.org.au/gong

CYCLING ETIQUETTE AND RULES

Riding behaviour plays such an important part in the safety and atmosphere of the MS Gong Ride.

When participating in the event and during training, all road rules should be adhered to while cycling. This includes stopping at lights and crossings, and carrying valid identification. It is crucial we all understand cycling etiquette to ensure all our riders, with varying levels of skill and fitness, are able to enjoy their ride together.

Our friends from Bicycle NSW have put together their top tips for successful “Bunch Riding”, that will have you riding like an expert in no time!

Braking and accelerating

- Accelerate steadily and in a controlled manner. This will reduce gaps in the formation being created.
- Only brake when necessary, and in a gentle manner. If possible, indicate by holding a hand above your head.

Formation

- Most common formation is a two by two style, whilst keeping your handlebars level with those next to you.
- You should position yourself behind the rider in front, with your back wheel slightly to the side of theirs. This increases visibility and allows for more reaction time. When you merge into a narrow road or path that requires single formation, the outside rider should move carefully in front of the rider to the left.
- Always remember to keep left unless overtaking.

Distance

- An ideal distance is about 30cm to 1m behind the rider in front.

Pack leaders

- Being the leader of the pack, you'll be setting the example! You'll be controlling the speed for the rest of the riders. Make sure you watch out for holes and debris on the road and notify those behind you.

Middle riders

- Take care not to overlap or touch the wheels of the other riders. Watch the rider in front, not their back wheel. This should help to increase your overall awareness. Pass along any important information about upcoming hazards on the road.

Back riders

- Riders at the back of the pack must advise the rest of the gang that cars are wishing to overtake. By using clear communication, you can keep the pack alert and safe. Use the simple call of “Car Back”.

Communicating

- Clear cycling communication is key for all riders to have a safe and great ride!

Hand signals

Although signals vary we've included some of the most common for you.



◀ Left turn



▶ Right turn



■ Stop



● Slow down



⤴ Give way



! Road hazard
(potholes)



! Road hazard

Graphic adapted from illustration courtesy of Bicycle NSW.
For more information visit: transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety

Top Tip from Brad McGee: Use your Voice

“Rider Up!” – notify the bunch that you are approaching a rider ahead.

“Rider Back!” – notify the bunch a rider is coming up from behind, also if you are the rider approaching, call out to the bunch ahead.

It is crucial that any call that is made is passed both up and down the bunch. This way, everyone knows what is going on. Communication is the key!

MS
GONG RIDE



MSGONGRIDE.ORG.AU
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@MSGONGRIDE
#MSGONGRIDE

**Thank you to our
event partners:**

