

2026 PARTICIPANT GUIDE



CONTENTS PAGE



SECTION	PAGE
Welcome Message	4-5
Cycling for a heartfelt cause	6
Important health information	7
Event schedule	8-12
Checklist	14
Equipment/Supplies for the ride	16
Pre Ride Information	17-20
Hazards	21
General Queries - Supporters	22
Route - Day 1	23-25
Route - Day 2	26-28
Route - Day 3	29-31
Pack riding information	32-34
Drink stops	35
Presentations/ Post event	36
Returning to Cairns	37
Partners	38

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Welcome to the 2026 Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge

On behalf of the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation, I am delighted to welcome you as we celebrate the 20th year of this much-loved event.

For two decades, the Cardiac Challenge has brought our community together with a shared purpose. In that time, riders and supporters have raised more than \$6 million to fund life-saving cardiac equipment for Far North Queensland.

Reaching 20 years is a significant milestone. It reflects the commitment of the many riders, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters who have helped make the event what it is today. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning for another ride, thank you for being part of this proud history.

People take on the Cardiac Challenge for many different reasons. Some ride after experiencing their own cardiac issue, some in support of someone they care about, and others in memory of someone they have lost. For some, it is the opportunity to set a personal goal and take on a challenge they may once have thought was beyond them. Whatever has brought you to the start line, your participation helps make a difference for others across our region.

The Cardiac Challenge is more than a cycling event. It is three days of teamwork, determination, friendship and some of the best scenery Far North Queensland has to offer. The ride can be challenging at times, but the sense of achievement, the connections you make and the difference you create make every pedal stroke worthwhile.

To everyone taking part, thank you for helping keep hearts beating stronger across our community. You are part of a legacy that has already changed many lives and will continue to support better health care for years to come.

Enjoy the ride, look out for one another and take pride in what we are achieving together.



Gina Hogan
CEO
Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation



Welcome to the 2026 Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge!

This year also marks a special transition. After leading the ride for 20 years, Glenys is sharing her knowledge and experience with Jenny, our new Fundraising and Marketing Manager. Together, we will travel the route and experience firsthand the people and spirit that make the Cardiac Challenge so unique.

The heart of this event is the camaraderie found in every kilometre, from roadside chats and challenging climbs to the friendships formed along the way.

As we mark this milestone year, we're celebrating three riders who have completed every Cardiac Challenge, while welcoming many former riders back as volunteers and riders again - proof the connection to this event lasts long after the finish line.

To those joining us for the first time: welcome. You're becoming part of a community where support and inclusion matter just as much as kilometres ridden.

To our returning riders: thank you. Your experience, encouragement and generosity are what make this event so special.

A few things to keep in mind as we prepare:

- Pack leaders and escort drivers are here to guide and protect you - please follow their lead and trust their experience.
- Volunteers are the heartbeat of this event. Their dedication ensures we arrive safely, hydrated and well-fed. A smile or thank you goes a long way.
- Look out for one another, especially during the tougher moments. The Cardiac Challenge has always been about connection as much as challenge.

As we celebrate this 20-year milestone, let's ride with pride, purpose and appreciation for everyone who has helped build this incredible legacy. Whether you're participating for the first time or the twentieth, you're part of a community that continues to make a real difference.

We look forward to sharing this journey with you and seeing you at the start line.



Glenys Duncombe
Ride Director
Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation



Jenny Coates
Fundraising and Marketing Manager
Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation



The Face of Cardiac Challenge

PETE McNALLY

Each year, Cairns in tropical Far North Queensland becomes a vibrant hub for cyclists from across Australia and beyond, all drawn together for the Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge. What began in 2007 as a vision has grown into a signature event that unites communities, inspires generosity and showcases the remarkable spirit of Far North Queensland.

Spanning three days and 319km, the ride attracts a diverse mix of participants - teens, retirees, professionals, farmers, and even health care workers - all united by a shared passion for making a difference. The Challenge is not just a physical endeavour; it's a transformative journey that pushes boundaries, builds resilience, and fosters a deep sense of connection.

The inspiration behind the challenge

The driving force behind the Challenge is Pete McNally, a 76-year-old with a lifelong connection to cardiac care due to his congenital heart condition. His determination to live life fully and his love for cycling led him to advocate for this unique fundraiser. Today, the Challenge serves as a beacon of hope, bringing together cardiologists, cardiac patients, and those touched by heart disease.

More than just a ride

The route offers riders a chance to experience Far North Queensland's diverse landscapes up close - from the shaded paths of the Kuranda Range and lush rainforests of the Atherton Tableland to the expansive golden savannahs and the stunning coastline at Cooktown's Coral Sea. For many, reaching the finish line is more than an achievement; it's a celebration of personal growth, community spirit, and compassion.

By the time they reach Cooktown, participants are filled with a sense of exhilaration, knowing they've cycled for a cause that truly matters.



Medical Information

If you have a known medical condition, we highly recommend you take the following steps:

- Please inform the Cardiac Challenge team of your medical conditions (this should have been supplied as part of your registration). This list will be provided to medics on the ride.
- Keep medication with you or with your escort driver (including inhaler).

Your safety is our primary concern. Medics will staff drink stops and a Queensland Ambulance Service vehicle will travel with the ride.

If you are not feeling well in the morning, we strongly advise you not to start the event. If you decide to not start, you must inform an event official/ride director so we can officially withdraw you.

If you start to feel unwell at any point during the event, we urge you to seek assistance rather than continue riding. Our medical team has the final say on whether you are fit to continue and may require you to stop riding if they believe it is unsafe to proceed.

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP

If at any time during the ride you experience chest pain or discomfort, shortness of breath, lightheadedness (dizziness), numbness around the mouth or in hands, difficulty concentrating, or stop sweating please stop immediately and seek medical attention. A medical evaluation does not constitute outside assistance.

Accidents or illness on the ride

If there is an accident or fall within the pack during the ride, your Pack leader will manage the situation. The pack may need to ride on to a safe area to stop but your front Pack Leader will manage this.

The Rear Escort and Pack Leader will manage the incident from the rear - they are all trained with a protocol to follow.

Information for asthmatics

There is a possibility of smoke along the ride due to the time of year. All asthmatics should consult their health care professional and if advised to, carry medication including Salbutamol puffers with them. Please make sure you bring your inhaler with you and inform your pack leader of its location.

Heat exhaustion

It is YOUR responsibility to manage your health on the ride. This includes hydration. We strongly recommend increasing your personal hydration before the ride and remaining mindful of your hydration while on the road.

EVENT SCHEDULE



Event Schedule is up to date as at 20/08/2026 and is subject to change.

TRAINING

Sunday, August 2, August 16 and August 30		
Date/ Time	Activity	Location
August 2, 6am - 11am	Copperlode Training Ride 1 - Hill training	Lake Morris Road
August 16, 6am - 11am	Copperlode Training Ride 2 - Hill training	Lake Morris Road
August 30, 6am - 11am	Copperlode Training Ride 3 - Hill training	Lake Morris Road

PRE RIDE

Wednesday, September 16, 2026		
Time	Activity	Location
5pm - 9pm	Kit Collection	Brothers Leagues Club
6pm - 9pm	Participant briefing (Riders, Volunteers and Supporters)	Brothers Leagues Club

Thursday, September 17, 2026		
Time	Activity	Location
10am - 3pm	Baggage drop off	E Block Loading Dock, Cairns Hospital

Friday, September 18, 2026		
Time	Activity	Location
10am - 2pm	Baggage drop off	E Block Loading Dock, Cairns Hospital

Please ensure your luggage is dropped off on Thursday or Friday morning, rather than waiting until the last 30 minutes, as we cannot guarantee there will be available space.

EVENT SCHEDULE



Event Schedule is up to date as at 20/08/2026 and is subject to changes on the day.

Saturday, September 19, 2026

Time	Activity	Location
5am - 5.30am	Non range riders - Arrive, load bikes onto trailer and jump into bus/ support vehicles (head to Kuranda or Mareeba location).	Skyrail (6 Skyrail Dr, Smithfield)
5.45am	Departure of Support vehicles, Escort Vehicles and buses	Skyrail (6 Skyrail Dr, Smithfield)
5.50am	Range Riders - gather for briefing	Skyrail (6 Skyrail Dr, Smithfield)
6am	Range Closure - Riders dispatched from Skyrail. Must complete journey before 8am.	Skyrail (6 Skyrail Dr, Smithfield)
7am - 9am	Stop at Centenary Park	Centenary Park, Kuranda
7am - 9am	Arrival at Rotary Park	Rotary Park, Mareeba
9am	Packs 15 & 16 leaves	Rotary Park, Mareeba
9.30am	Mareeba Mayor welcome	Rotary Park, Mareeba
9.40am	Pack Briefing	Rotary Park, Mareeba
10 - 10.45am	Packs depart in order (Order TBC)	Rotary Park, Mareeba
11am - 12pm	Lunch Stop at Mt Molloy	Mt Molloy CWA Hall
12pm - 4pm	Consult day cards and pack leader instructions for drink stops.	Mareeba - Mt Carbine
12pm - 4pm	Set up campsite	Mt Carbine
4pm	Wellness Embodied physio & Australian Retirement Trust Chill Zone.	Mt Carbine
6pm	Dinner Served	Mt Carbine
6.30pm	Daily highlight video	Mt Carbine
7.30pm	Tug in the Ring (Tug of War)	Mt Carbine
8pm	Watch Football on the bigscreen	Mt Carbine
8.30pm	Raffle Draw	Mt Carbine

EVENT SCHEDULE



Event Schedule is up to date as at 20/08/2026 and is subject to changes on the day.

Sunday, September 20, 2026		
Time	Activity	Location
5.30am - 7am	Breakfast. Coffee from 5.30am	Mt Carbine
From 6am (TBC)	Depart Mt Carbine - <i>Times will be posted and displayed in common area.</i>	Mt Carbine
6am - 7.20am	Supporters must leave before 7.20am due to range closure.	Mt Carbine - Lakeland
6.30am - 11am	Consult day cards and pack leader instructions for drink stops	Mt Carbine - Palmer River
11am - 12pm	Lunch stop at Palmer River	Palmer River Roadhouse
12pm - 4pm	Consult day cards and pack leader instructions for drink stops	Palmer River- Lakeland
4pm	Wellness Embodied physio & Australian Retirement Trust Chill Zone.	Lakeland
6pm	Dinner served	Lakeland
6.30pm	Daily highlight video	Lakeland
7.30pm	Highest fundraiser acknowledgment	Lakeland
7.35pm	King and Queen of the Mountain crowned	Lakeland
8.30pm	Raffle draw	Lakeland

EVENT SCHEDULE



Event Schedule is up to date as at 20/08/2026 and is subject to changes on the day.

Monday, September 21, 2026		
Time	Activity	Location
6am - 7.30am	Breakfast	Lakeland
From 6.30am (TBC)	Depart Lakeland- <i>Times will be posted and displayed in common area.</i>	Lakeland
6.30am - 11am	Consult day cards and pack leader instructions for drink stops	Lakeland - Cooktown
6.30am - 11.30am	Black Mountain - Drink stop and pack photos	Black Mountain
6.30am - 11.30am	Muster Location (ALL Riders). Escort Vehicles to keep travelling into town to meet at Cooktown RSL Club.	Cooktown Information Bay
6.30am - 11.30am	Support Vehicles to meet at Cooktown RSL Club	RSL Club
12pm	Ride into Cooktown through to group photo location (to be advised). <i>Times may vary depending on arrival of all packs.</i>	RSL Club
12 - 1.30pm	Lunch	RSL Club
5.30pm	Arrive for End of Ride Function	Cooktown Event Centre
6pm	Dinner served	Cooktown Event Centre
7.30pm	Presentation	Cooktown Event Centre
8.30pm	Raffle draw	Cooktown Event Centre

EVENT SCHEDULE



Event Schedule is up to date as at 20/08/2026 and is subject to changes on the day.

Tuesday, September 22, 2026

Time	Activity	Location
6am - 7.30am	Breakfast	Cooktown State School
6am - 8.15am	Load luggage and bikes. Ensure bikes are loaded on trailer, the day before or well before 8am. Only bikes with an approved tag will be accepted.	Cooktown State School
8.30am	Buses depart	Cooktown State School.

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Rider (Pre Ride)

- ☐ Training
- ☐ Bike maintenance
- ☐ Bike insurance
- ☐ Book accommodation (if applicable).
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with schedule
- ☐ Pack luggage and drop off according to schedule (if not supported).
- ☐ Attend pre-ride briefing at Brothers Leagues Club

Supporter (Pre Ride)

- ☐ Car maintenance (make sure it can handle the distance)
- ☐ Book accommodation (if applicable).
- ☐ Familiarise yourself with schedule
- ☐ Pack luggage and add bike rack to car
- ☐ Attend pre-ride briefing at Brother's Leagues Club

With more than 300km to cover during three days, it's essential to prepare with longer-distance rides. To help you get ready, there's a weekly social ride departing from opposite Seabreeze Café at Cairns Hospital on the Esplanade most Sundays at 6.30am, along with regular hill training rides up to Lake Morris Road. Stay up to date on training activities by visiting the Cardiac Challenge Facebook page- <https://www.facebook.com/Cardiac.Challenge>.

Get your bike ready

You'll need a bike suitable for sealed roads. While mountain bikes are allowed, we recommend fitting them with slick tyres for better performance. We also welcome E-bikes.

Note: Triathlon Bikes, Tri bars, earphones, and music are NOT permitted for safety reasons. Before the event, thoroughly inspect your bike to ensure it's in top condition:

- **Chain:** Properly oiled and not overstretched.
- **Brakes:** Functioning efficiently.
- **Tyres:** In good condition, with at least one or two spares on hand.

Insurance

The Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge provides event insurance, which includes public liability coverage. However, please note that personal injury and bike damage are not covered - these are your personal responsibility.

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Essential gear

- ☐ **Bike:** Make sure it's well-maintained and suited to your comfort level.
- ☐ **Helmet:** A correctly fitted helmet that meets Australian safety standards.
- ☐ **Protective Gear:** Consider items like gloves, sunglasses, long sleeves, and neck protectors - the sun can be harsh!
- ☐ **Basic Repair Kit:** Include 1-2 spare tubes and spokes, a hand pump, and a multi-tool.
- ☐ **Sun Protection:** Bring sunscreen, a sun visor, moisturiser and sleeves/ riding gloves (if needed).
- ☐ **Cycling Apparel:** Wear comfortable cycling gear. The 2026 Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge jersey (included in your registration) must be worn on Days 1 and 3. You can wear a team jersey on Day 2.
- ☐ **Hydration:** Carry drink bottles or a CamelBak-type drinking bladder.
- ☐ **Electrolytes:** We'll have a small supply of electrolytes available, but if you have a preferred brand, flavour or specific requirements, please bring your own.
- ☐ **Bike rack:** Make sure you have a bike rack to secure your riders bike for the return trip back and if it covers your licence plate, please make sure you have a bike plate with the car rego (**Supporters**)
- ☐ **Apparel:** Wear your Cardiac Challenge t-shirts (**Supporters**)

For overnight (Camping)

- ☐ **Tent/shelter:** If not hiring through us, bring your own.
- ☐ **Bedding:** A swag or other suitable sleeping gear.
- ☐ **Fold-Up Chair/Stool:** For comfort at camp.
- ☐ **Clothing for Different Temperatures:** Be prepared for varying conditions.
- ☐ **Personal items:** Towel, toiletries, torch, medical kit, medications, and insect repellent.

Note: Luggage loaded into our trucks must not exceed 20 kg. Each person is limited to a maximum of two items (including swag). The trucks are intended to assist riders without support - if you have a supporter, please use their vehicle for your luggage. Luggage will be weighed upon drop off. No items will be accepted for loading into the truck without being well labelled. Also, DO NOT attached to multiple items together with straps.

General supplies

- ☐ Toiletries and personal medical supplies (including pain relief and chamois cream).
- ☐ Après-Ride clothing and some cash for things like coffee or the bar.
- ☐ Electronics: Phone, camera, batteries, and charger.
- ☐ Snacks and drinks: Bring your preferred snacks, protein shakes, electrolytes, or other foods you like before, during, or after your ride.

Manned drink stops with water, electrolytes, and fruit will be available approx. every 20-25km - for riders only, support please head straight to final location each day.

PRE RIDE INFORMATION



Pre Ride Training

In the lead-up to the Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge, there will be three official training rides along Lake Morris Road to Copperlode Dam on August 2, August 16 and August 30 (hill training). You also can join the regular Sunday morning rides to learn to ride in a pack or sharpen your cycling skills. These depart at 6.30am from the Esplanade, opposite Sea Breeze Café at Cairns Hospital.

Bike Maintenance

If you're not experienced with bike maintenance, consider booking a service at a local bicycle shop. Our event sponsor, Pump 'n' Pedals, is available for mechanical support during the ride (at lunch stops and in the evening).

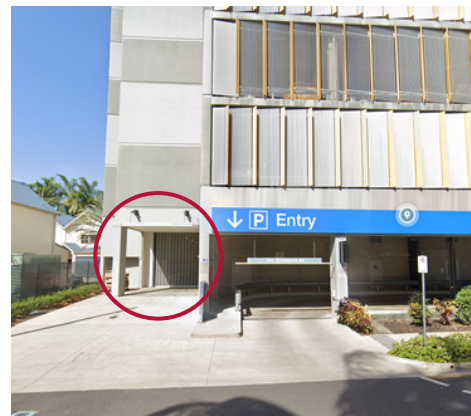
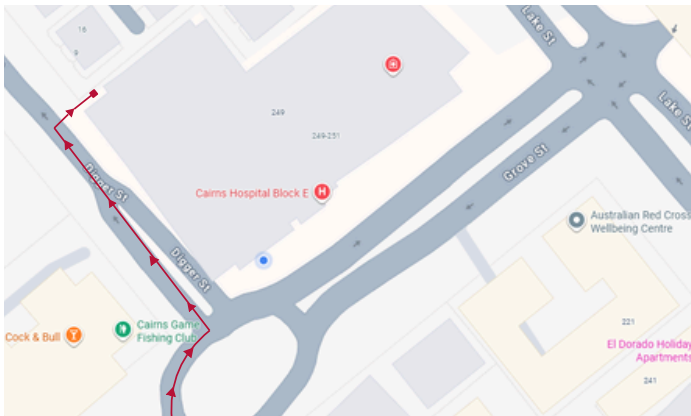
For all pre event mechanical needs, we recommend you stop by their shop at 113-117 Sheridan Street, Cairns, if you need professional assistance.

Luggage drop off

If you're unsupported, don't worry - we'll transport your luggage and camping gear for you at no extra cost. Just keep it to a reasonable weight and size. NO more than 20kg!

Drop off details:

- **When:** Thursday, Friday, September 17-18, between 10am and 2pm.
- **Where:** E Block loading dock, Digger Street, Cairns (next to the entrance of the carpark).
- **Note:** No luggage will be accepted on Day 1 of the ride. Make sure to drop it off in advance.



Kit collection

Your Jersey and any merchandise that you have paid for must be collected from Brothers Leagues Club on Wednesday, September 16 from 5pm.

Briefing

The riders and supporters briefing will be held on Wednesday, September 16 at Brothers Leagues Club at 6pm. This is your final opportunity to ask questions before the ride - whether you're a first-timer or a seasoned Cardiac Challenge participant. Details may change, so please keep an eye on your emails for updates.

Not riding the range?

If you're not cycling the range, **buses with trailers** will be available at the front of the **Skyrail Carpark** to transport you and your bike to Kuranda or Mareeba. The buses will **depart before 5.45am**, as the road will be closed to traffic going up the range from 6am SHARP.

Alternatively, your support can transport you and your bike, but they **must be on the range before 5.45am**.



Shuttle Bus (from Skyrail)

If you choose not to ride up the Kuranda Range, your support person can drop you at either Kuranda Centenary Park or Mareeba Rotary Park.

If you don't have a support person, please go to Skyrail to load your bike onto one of the trailers (Kuranda or Mareeba) and board the corresponding bus. These buses will depart before the range closes for our range riders.

If going to Kuranda:

Make sure you are on the correct bus and your bike is on the correct trailer. From Kuranda, you'll ride into Mareeba in single file without support vehicles, meeting at Mareeba Rotary Park.

If going to Mareeba:

Make sure you are on the correct bus and your bike is on the correct trailer. You will be taken straight to Mareeba Rotary Park, where you will join your pack (once all riders have arrived). From here, you will be escorted to our final stop for the day at Mt Carbine.



Wellness Embodied

Supporting Cardiac Challenge for five years



All 2026 Cardiac Challenge participants receive \$10 off their initial Physiotherapy, Osteopathy, or Massage.

Existing clients receive a free compression boot, ice bath, or sauna session following their next treatment if they show this ad.



Services:

- Physiotherapy
- Remedial Massage
- Osteopathy
- Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy
- Recovery Space
- Occupational Therapy

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Registered support and their vehicles

Support vehicles MUST depart BEFORE any of the riders. We need to try to avoid traffic getting in between packs on the road and minimise disruption to other road users.

If you do not get out before the riders, delay your trip to avoid getting caught up in the ride train. If you do get caught up in the packs on the road, pull off the road to allow general traffic right-of-way if necessary.

If you find yourself having to pass a Pack(s), do so promptly and without pulling off the road. DO NOT take photos or try to get a rider's attention – this is very unsafe and will be frowned on by Police. Ensure usual safe passing principles are considered – REMEMBER YOUR RIDER MAY BE PUT AT RISK BY YOUR UNSAFE PASSING!

At camp

LOST PROPERTY - If handed in, it will be with SES.

If feeling unwell, please seek out our medics or the QAS officer for assessment and advice. They will liaise with the Ride Director as necessary.

**** DO NOT COME ON THE RIDE IF YOU ARE UNWELL ****

Accommodation

Camping Grounds:

All personal support vehicles staying at the Mt Carbine Horse Sport Ground, Lakeland School, and Cooktown State School must display the official ride support vehicle sticker. No sticker means no access, so make sure your vehicle is properly identified.

Alternate Accommodation:

While there are limited accommodation options along the route, Cooktown does offer more choices. However, keep in mind that it's Queensland school holidays, so booking well in advance is essential.

Cooktown dinner bookings for guests

If you have additional guests or family members joining you in Cooktown, they are welcome to attend the end-of-ride dinner, but pre-booking is required. This helps us keep track of numbers and ensure everything runs smoothly. Tickets can be purchased on the Cardiac Challenge website.

Registered support crew and riders: Your dinner ticket is included in your registration, so there's no need to book separately.

Returning to Cairns

- Supported Riders: You're free to leave Cooktown whenever you wish. Please let us know if you're not staying for dinner so we can keep an accurate count and only pay for those who attend.
- Unsupported Riders: You'll need to pre-book a seat on the return bus through the website. **Only those who have booked a seat on the bus are permitted to load their bike on our bike trailers.**

PRE RIDE INFORMATION



Meals

We offer three meals a day - a continental breakfast spread, sandwiches and evening meals. The first meal provided on the event is prepared by the CWA ladies at Mt Molloy. Dinners are provided by the Mt Carbine Horse Sports Association and Lakeland P&F. Both groups also offer bacon and egg rolls or a cooked breakfast for a nominal charge as a fundraiser for those organisations. Special diets (as noted on your registration) will be catered for separately to the masses.

This year, the Cooktown RSL Club will provide a selection of hot canapés for us to enjoy as we celebrate this achievement. Pack Hero presentations will be announced at the RSL Club by pack leaders to award an individual from each pack.

An evening gala meal (included in your registration) in Cooktown will be provided this year by Cairns Spit Roast at the Cooktown Event Centre for registered riders, volunteers, supporters, guests and family who have been paid for through our website.

Wristbands – These will be issued to all registered participants (Riders, Supporters and Volunteers) and will identify those who have been catered for. Put it on the first day, and ensure you keep it on for the duration of the ride.

We will provide biodegradable disposable crockery and cutlery, so there's no need to bring your own.

Ensure you wear your wristbands - no wristband = no food.

FOR RANGE
FOR VALUE
FOR EASE



**YOU
CAN'T
BEAT
LOCAL**



You can do everything right but sometimes accidents happen and we need to have systems in place to keep everyone safe and reduce the consequences in the unlikely event of an accident.

1 - Hazard Spotting

Front car calls out hazards ("road kill", "potholes", "grid", "soft edges", "debris", "traffic/pack in front", "approaching drink stop" etc).

2 - Control the Hazard

- pack leaders call out hazards and instructions
- eg "slowing", or "roadkill on left", or "grid"
- ALL pack riders repeat the hazard call and instep. eg "slowing"

3 - Reduce the consequences

- Packs ride in their advertised speeds which will allow riders to drink while cycling.
- Packs well hydrated inc appropriate stop.
- Left rider as near as possible to the left side of the road/shoulder. Right rider 1.5 mts from left rider.
- Have good incident response inc police, ambulance, first aid, communications (radio)

PLEASE NOTE:

Pack leaders and escort drivers are not to use earpieces.

While the ride operates under a number of permits, that ALL participants are still required to abide by road rules, including the use of mobile phones while on the road.





Accommodation

Camping Grounds:

All personal support vehicles staying at the Mt Carbine Horse Sport Ground, Lakeland School, and Cooktown State School must display the official ride support vehicle sticker. No sticker means no access, so make sure your vehicle is properly identified.

Alternate Accommodation:

While there are limited accommodation options along the route, Cooktown does offer more choices. However, keep in mind that it's Queensland school holidays, so booking well in advance is essential.

Buses with trailers for bikes will be available at the front of the Skyrail Carpark to transport riders to either Kuranda or Mareeba. They will depart before 5.45am as the road will be closed to all traffic going up the range.

Supporting rider up the range?

You can transport your rider and their bike, up the range if they choose not to ride the range but you **must be on the range before 5.45 am.**

Returning to Cairns

Supporter and supported Riders are free to leave Cooktown whenever you're ready. Please let us know if you're not staying for dinner so we can keep an accurate count.

Briefing and gear collection

Details will be sent out prior to the ride to ensure you're fully prepared. Stay tuned for updates!

- Participant briefing will be Wednesday, September 16 at Brothers Leagues Club
- Gear collection will be at the Brothers Briefing on Wednesday, September 16.

Details above can change, so always keep an eye out for your emails.

Camp

Please proceed directly to the next camp location and do not follow your rider along the route. We recommend leaving camp each morning before the first rider packs depart to allow enough time to travel to the next camp and avoid becoming part of the road train.

Please camp only in the designated camping areas. If your tent is set up outside these areas, you may be asked to relocate. Please refer to the camp maps on pages 24, 27 and 30.

In Cooktown - go check out the sights and activities around Cooktown before meeting at the RSL to cheer in riders.

Reserve the street frontage near the RSL Club for official vehicles and escorts. Cheer on the riders as they arrive into Cooktown, this is a massive achievement worth celebrating.



Day One – Skyrail to Mt Carbine (123km)	Sector	Total
Cairns Skyrail Smithfield – Start Day 1		0
Centenary Park Kuranda – Drink Stop	16	16
Davies Creek Turn-off – Drink Stop	25	41
Mareeba Rotary Park – Morning Tea	17	58
Lake Mitchell Truck Stop Bay – Drink Stop	21	79
Mt Molloy CWA Hall – Lunch Stop	18	97
Maryfarms – Drink Stop	22	119
Mt Carbine – Finish Day 1	8	127

5am Start – assemble at Skyrail Carpark, Smithfield

- ALL RIDERS ARE TO WEAR THEIR 2026 RIDE JERSEYS. RIDERS TRAVEL SINGLE FILE TO MAREEBA - NO FORMAL ESCORTING. ESCORT VEHICLES WILL ROVE IN CASE PICK-UP IS REQUIRED
- We will have a coffee van at the Skyrail carpark and toilets will be available.
- The range will close at 6am SHARP.
- We have a Road Closure special permit for the Kuranda Range up lane, but you must feel confident you can get to the top by 8am. If in doubt don't do it!

Not riding the range?

- If you are NOT riding the Range and require a lift up, you should seek out the bus or an escort vehicle in the Skyrail Carpark before 5.30am to load your bike and self. You are responsible for securing your own bicycle. Ensure you have zip ties to help secure your bike.
- **The bus departs at 5.45am SHARP.**
- You can join the ride at Centenary Park Kuranda or Rotary Park Mareeba but note:
- Kuranda to Mareeba will NOT be formally escorted and you will ride single file at your own pace. If being transported by family/friends, you MUST be on the range no later than 5.45am as the west bound (UP) lane will be closed at 6am sharp.

Range Riders

- Police will be present and monitoring progress and there will be tail-end Charlie escorts in case of breakdown.
- There will be two phases of rider-release. Slower riders should leave in the first release and 15 minutes later faster riders will be allowed to go. Keep an eye out for any less skilled riders who may need some assistance or support.
- If you have a mechanical on the range you will be picked up by tail end charlie. You MUST NOT repair your bike on the range.

First Stop – Centenary Park Kuranda

- Slower riders may leave Kuranda from 7am when instructed by the Despatcher.
- Riding the Kennedy Highway MUST be in single file and passing must be done safely – check for traffic and communicate if you are passing. Ride with at least one other rider or near other riders but IN SINGLE FILE and only pass safely. Check for traffic.
- There will be a drink stop at Davies Creek Road.



Going into Mareeba

- SES will direct riders at the Kennedy Highway-Byrnes Street Intersection. Follow their instructions - you may be advised to walk your bikes across the road.
- There is a set of traffic lights at the Byrnes St – Rankine St intersection (McDonalds) – follow usual road rules. BEWARE of vehicles reversing from parking spots along Byrnes St.
- Gather at Mareeba Rotary Park at the northern end of Byrnes St, enjoy some fruit, cakes, tea and coffee from Mareeba Rotary. There are toilets in the park and we will have some portables on-site as well. Numbers gathering at any one time in Mareeba Rotary Park will be restricted and pack departure will be managed accordingly.
- Form into your Pack for a roll call and briefing by your Pack Leader prior to rolling out to Mt Molloy for lunch.

Beyond Mareeba

- Please note – only 1 pack per drink stop at any one time.
- There will be a drink stop at the Truck Bay about 23km from Mareeba.
- Lunch will be at the Mt Molloy CWA building. Don't forget to thank the CWA ladies for making your lunch.

SES will establish a dismount zone in Mt Molloy and coordinate to walk the bikes across the road for lunch. Public toilets are adjacent to the hall.

Mt Molloy to Mt Carbine

Your Pack Leader will call for departure when ready. Check all fellow pack members are present before leaving. Walk across the road to the SES supervised departure zone.

Just out of Mt Molloy, there is a one-lane bridge. You will have right-of-way but be cautious. Police may be present on the day but if not, follow usual road rules, give way and regroup as necessary. There will be an optional drink stop at Mary Farms which is only about 8km from Mt Carbine. Slower packs are advised to stop. Faster packs should advise the drink stop people via radio if not stopping.

Mt Carbine

Camp will be at the Mt Carbine Horse Sports ground on the left past the Hotel or by personal arrangement. ***Luggage can be collected at or near the luggage truck.***

Dinner will be 6pm-7.30pm. Dinner is provided by the Mt Carbine Horse Sports Association. Special diets and vegetarians will have a separate queue.

There will be a bar available in the grounds with TV screen.

Supporters

Supporters please drop your rider to the start location and head straight to camp. In the afternoon be there to cheer in and welcome the riders.

ROUTE - DAY 1



Mt Carbine Camp Grounds

*Maps are subject to changes, please follow the directions from the Camp Coordinator: Terry Roos.





Day Two - Mt Carbine to Lakeland (113km)	Sector	Total
Mt Carbine - Start Day 2		0
Hurricane Station Rd - Uplift point & Drink Stop	25	25
Top of Desailly Range - Re-group & Drink Stop	7	32
Whumbal Creek - Drink Stop packs 1 – 3 can bypass	25	57
Truck Stop Drink Stop for packs 1 – 3	11	68
Palmer River Roadhouse - Lunch Stop	15	83
Bonny Glen Station Road - Drink Stop	11	94
Top of Byerstown Range - Briefing Zone	5	99
Base of Byerstown Range - Regroup	4	103
Lakeland Hotel Grounds – Finish Day 2	10	113

“Hug a volunteer day” - make sure you thank/hug our generous volunteers. Don’t forget your Pack Leaders and Escorts drivers ... remember they are all working hard to make your experience as enjoyable as possible.

Today you will be travelling through Savannah country – a traditional outback landscape. There will be long undulations to challenge you.

Mt Carbine

- Coffee will be available from 5.30am. Breakfast is **strictly from 5.30-7am (These times may change due to logisitcs around range closure)**. Give preference to the slower packs who start early.
- First packs scheduled to leave should pack up their belongings before breakfast to be ready to start with their pack.
- The Mt Carbine Horse Sports Association also will offer bacon and egg rolls as a fundraiser.

Mt Carbine to Desailly Range

- Your pack leader will brief you prior to departure.
- Departure will be reverse order - slowest to fastest from 7am from the roadside in front of the hotel as listed on the Information board and on the Cardiac Challenge Facebook Page.
- The Range will have rolling closures. More information will be provided at Brother’s briefing on Wednesday, September 16.

Advise your pack leader if you are not intending to ride the Desailly Range so your escorts or an escort is aware you need a lift.





- A drink stop will be just past Whumbal Creek and the truck stop before Palmer River.
- There are long rolling hills. If any packs come up behind a slower pack, they are to maintain a safe distance for general traffic to pass a pack and still get in between the pack to pass when able.
- There will be no Pack passing unless/until the slower Pack and Escort Vehicles are able to pull off the road to allow the faster Pack to pass. This can sometimes take a little patience!

*****LISTEN TO PACK LEADER INSTRUCTIONS *****

Lunch at Palmer River

- SES will establish a dismount zone on the left side of the road. Cross carefully on their instruction. Watch for the cattle grid leading into the Roadhouse.
- Keep your break to 30 minutes or as advised by your Pack Leader. Move quickly through the lunch queues and don't forget to acknowledge the volunteers.

Palmer River to Lakeland

- After lunch can be quite challenging and warm. We can transport some riders to the top of the Byerstown range – arrange this with your Pack Leader.
- Packs are to stop at the top of the Byerstown descent for a safety briefing.
- Riding down the Byerstown will be unescorted. Your Escort will re-join you at the re-group area at the bottom.
- Descend at your own pace, only “feathering” the brakes if necessary.
- Pack Leaders will talk about this more.
- Gather together again to ride to the Lakeland Hotel grounds under Escort.
- A dismount area will be established at the turn into the campground.
- Take care stopping and turning into the camp.

Lakeland

- Camping will be at the Lakeland School grounds down the road from the Lakeland Pub.
- The meal will be at the pub and supplied by the Lakeland P&C, supporting the Lakeland School. Pub food will still be on sale to the public. The bar will close at 10pm. Dinner will be from 6-7.30pm.

ROUTE - DAY 2



Lakeland Motel/ Pub & Lakeland School (Camping)

*Maps are subject to changes, please follow the directions from the Camp Coordinator.





Day Three - Lakeland to Cooktown (82km)	Sector	Total
Lakeland Hotel – Start Day 3		0
Ergon Powerline access - <i>Drink Stop</i>	28	28
Black Mountain- <i>Drink Stop</i>	22.6	50.6
Cooktown Muster Area - <i>Drink Stop</i>	22	72.6
Cooktown Endeavour Park – Finish Day 3	3	75.6

ALL RIDERS ARE TO WEAR THEIR 2026 RIDE OR HIGHEST FUNDRAISER JERSEY

Lakeland to Cooktown

- Coffee will be available from 5.30am and breakfast from 6-7.30am with preference to the slower packs which start early.
- Slower pack riders - pack up before breakfast to be ready to start with their pack.
- The Lakeland P&F also will offer bacon and egg rolls as a fundraiser.
- Your Pack Leader will brief you prior to departure. Departure will be reverse order (slowest to fastest) from 7am from the front of the Hotel in Foyster Drive. The SES Despatcher will send you off as outlined on the Information whiteboard and via social media.

Arrival in Cooktown

- Packs will arrive at the Information Bay, where SES personnel will provide directions and instructions upon arrival. Escort drivers will continue into town and wait at the Cooktown RSL Club.
- Pack photos will be taken at the Information Bay. Once all packs have arrived, participants will ride through together en masse to the location for the official group photo of all riders. You will be advised of the photo location prior to arriving in Cooktown. We anticipate riders will begin arriving in Cooktown from midday onwards.
- After photos, move on to the RSL Club for lunch, drinks and the pack hero presentations. You will have plenty of time to relax and freshen up in your accommodation or at the camp site (in the Cooktown State School grounds).
- Dinner will be at the Cooktown Event Centre from 6pm. Drinks can be bought at the bar.
- Buses will be available from 5.45pm to take you to the Event Centre/PCYC and home again after dinner. Locations for pick up is strictly from the Seaview and Sovereign Hotels.

Support people

- Support vehicles should depart from Lakeland before the riders to avoid unnecessary Pack passing. Go check out the sights and activities around Cooktown.
- The street frontage near the Cooktown RSL Club is reserved for official vehicles and escorts. Cheer on the riders as they arrive into Cooktown, this is a massive achievement worth celebrating.



ROUTE - DAY 3



Cooktown Information Bay

*Maps are subject to changes, please follow the directions from the SES.



Cooktown

- Camping will be at the Cooktown State School.
- The luggage truck and bike trailer will be at the school, please load your bike after the ride IF you have purchased a seat back to Cairns. Please speak with the bus drivers to make sure you are on their list.
- Additional toilets and showers will be open in the school grounds.

Camping at the Cooktown State School

- Access for School Camping is via a lane off Charles St. beside the Cooktown Pool – can be a bit rough across the road from the Events Centre.
- Some toilets and showers on-site will be unlocked.

Not camping at the school?

- If you are not camping at the school, your gear will still have to be collected from the luggage truck at the school.
- Unfortunately, it is too hard to ensure your luggage is nearer the back of the truck when luggage is being dropped off at different times.

ROUTE - DAY 3



Events Centre and Cooktown State School (Camping)

*Maps are subject to change, please follow the directions from the Camp Coordinator.



PACK RIDING INFORMATION



The Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge prioritises a safe and organised experience, with comprehensive assistance for all riders. We operate under strict permits from the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Transport and Main Roads, so it's crucial to follow all guidelines and directions from the ride management team.

Remember: This is a social charity ride, not a race. Stay with your pack, ride at your pack's speed, and communicate well with other riders.

Safety overtaking packs

Each pack will have two or three Pack Leaders - one at the front and one or more at the back. Pack Leaders and escort vehicles stay in constant communication via UHF radios. For everyone's safety and enjoyment:

- Follow Pack Leader instructions at all times.
- Ride in a tight formation to prevent general traffic from breaking into the pack.



Prohibited items

Earphones, mobile phones, tri-bars and audio devices, other than official UHF radios, are NOT to be used while riding in a Pack. You are NOT permitted to bring your own UHF radio.

Mechanical/ flats

- Call out to warn your fellow riders, pulling off the road safely. The pack may need to ride on until it is safe to stop but the Rear Escort will stay with you.
- If you have a minor mechanical that can be fixed quickly, pack leaders will slow the pack for you until you catch up. However if you have a puncture or a mechanical that is not quickly fixed, you will have to load your bike onto the rear Escort vehicle and jump into the Escort vehicle to be taken to the next drink stop, where you can fix your mechanical in safety and re-join your pack. Please become familiar with the rear escort vehicle bike rack - as you will need to load the bike as quickly as possible.



Average speed/changing packs

- The Holy Grail of pack cycling is to achieve an average pack speed that is safe and suitable for all riders. The advertised pack speed is the average speed for the ENTIRE ride including hills.
- Packs will contain a range of cycling abilities and the actual average speed of the pack will be within the target range to ensure the pack stays together and operates safely on the road. A pack's ride speed is only as fast as the slowest rider.
- If you are a stronger rider, do not surge at the front. Remember - this is a social ride, not a race. If you'd like to change packs (faster or slower), you MUST discuss this with your pack leader. Do not be offended if your Pack Leader suggests moving packs.
- When riding up the Kuranda and Desailly ranges, ride at your own speed, single file. There is NO Pack riding Kuranda to Mareeba. Ride in single file, be vigilant and check behind if passing other riders and let them know you are "passing on the right".
- There will be roving Escort vehicles should you need to be picked up. Please ensure you are in a safe position with adequate area for the Escort to pull in for you.

Signaling

Communication is essential but too much information can cause "information overload". On the ride, these are the main signals:

SIGNIFICANT HOLES/HAZARDS - Potholes, road debris; grids, or road kill. It is important to use hand signals and call out.

GRID/TRACKS - These should be crossed at right angles to avoid wheels getting caught in the track. Listen for the calls and take appropriate action and be aware of where your fellow riders are!

SLOWING/STOPPING - This is obvious but often forgotten when pulling into drink stops. Watch for hand signalling as well!

PACK ON/PACK OFF - Called out when a gap forms ("pack off") in the pack and when a gap is closed ("pack on"). Front riders should slow a little until the Pack has re-formed.

SINGLE FILE - Generally this will be a Pack Leader's decision with a call and hand signal for the Pack to go single file. Riders on the right will move in front of the cyclist to their left or as advised by the Pack Leader in briefings.

PASSING ON RIGHT - A must when riding single file. Don't forget to check for traffic.

CAR BACK - Again relevant when riding single file



Rest and Drink Stops

Approximately every 20-25km there is a drink stop so riders can rehydrate and take a short break. At each stop there also will be fruit and some snacks.

Get in quickly – move off the road quickly into the drink stop area smoothly, so riders behind you can get off the road promptly and safely. **DO NOT BRAKE SUDDENLY OR SWING IN SUDDENLY IN FRONT OF ANOTHER RIDER.**

DO NOT LEAN YOUR BIKES AGAINST ANY VEHICLES – bikes have been run over accidentally and we are not liable.

Time in the drink stop should be kept to approx. 10 minutes but will vary depending on incoming packs in the immediate vicinity. Portaloos will be available at most stops. If a toilet break is required, do this prior to seeking food and drink. Listen for and be ready when your Pack Leader calls out indicating anticipated departure – no one should be left behind unless by arrangement.

To see how to navigate in and out of drink stops, please watch this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJj7inVT4pl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3-uF36j41Q>

Medics - All drink stops will have a medic wearing red volunteer shirts. If you are feeling unwell, heat stressed etc, or have sustained a fall or injury while riding, ensure you see the medic for assessment. If they deem you should not ride, please abide by their judgement.

What's required of escort vehicle drivers

- Each pack has an escort vehicle front and rear. Escort vehicle drivers are in contact with the pack leaders via UHF radio to warn of hazards or traffic build-up behind.
- Ideally, the Pack including Escort Vehicles should run with the smallest footprint to deter other vehicles pulling into the Pack.
- Rear Escorts advise the Pack Leaders if there is a build-up of general traffic or a large vehicle coming up the rear. Our Police permit advises to avoid a buildup of more than six vehicles. The Pack Leader will manage whether to safely pull the Pack over to allow traffic to pass so listen to instructions.
- No rider should pass the front vehicle or fall behind the rear escort vehicle. If a rider lags or continuously causes disruption in the pack or does not maintain their line, the rear escort vehicle will advise the pack leader who will determine the best course of action.
- You may hear Escort vehicles signaling vehicles passing:
"Beep Beep = vehicle passing - all riders maintain formation while keeping to the left."



To help you stay hydrated and energised, drink stops are set up approximately every 20-25km along the route. These are clearly marked and staffed by our amazing volunteers.

At each drink stop, you'll find:

- Water to top up your bottles
- Fruit such as bananas, watermelon, and oranges for a quick energy boost
- Hydration electrolyte powder to add to your water (We'll have a small supply of electrolytes and gels available, but if you have a preferred brand, flavour or specific requirements, please bring your own).
- Toilets (most locations)
- Sunscreen
- Friendly faces to cheer you on and offer support

Locations vary depending on the stage of the ride, but you can expect them in convenient and safe pull-off areas along the way.

These stops are not just about refuelling - they're also a great chance to rest your legs, regroup with your pack and enjoy the camaraderie of the ride before setting off again.



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Raffle

- Tickets for sale at Mt Carbine & Cooktown through the Hospital Foundation team.
- Lakeland P&F to provide a raffle, supporting their local community on night 2 (To be confirmed).



Raffle Night 1
Tickets \$10 each, 3 for \$25 or
7 for \$50

1st Prize \$1000 Visa Gift Card

2nd Prize \$500 Pump & Pedals Gift Card


3rd Prize \$250 Visa Gift Card

Tickets are sold each day and drawn that night.
Vouchers are presented on the night and the winner is responsible for
the safety of the vouchers.
Lost tickets will not be replaced.



Raffle Night 3
Tickets \$10 each, 3 for \$25 or
7 for \$50

1st & 2nd Prize \$1000 Visa Gift Card

3rd & 4th Prize \$500 Pump & Pedals
Gift Card 

5th & 6th Prize \$250 Visa Gift Card

Tickets are sold each day and drawn that night.
Vouchers are presented on the night and the winner is responsible for
the safety of the vouchers.
Lost tickets will not be replaced.

Awards

Highest Fundraisers

On Day 2 of the ride, the Yellow Jersey is awarded to the highest fundraising team and the highest fundraising individual who is not part of a team. These jerseys are presented at the Lakeland Hotel and are worn with pride on Day 3 of the ride.

King and Queen of the Mountain

Also on Day 2, the titles of King and Queen of the Mountain are awarded to the fastest riders up the Desailly Range.

Pack Hero

At the end of the ride, during the celebration at the Cooktown RSL Club, each Pack Leader announces their Pack Hero. This special recognition is given to someone in their pack who truly deserves a little extra acknowledgment - whether for their spirit, support, effort, or contribution throughout the ride. The gift is kindly donated by Passions of Paradise.

End of Ride Dinner

Meet at the Event Centre Cooktown from 5.30pm for a roast dinner served by Cairns Spit Roast, with drinks available at the bar and live entertainment by the MARIAs. Celebrate your achievement alongside riders, supporters, volunteers, staff, and family who've all travelled to share in the final night.

RETURNING TO CAIRNS



Bus passengers should put their bikes into their pre-delivered boxes (luggage truck) or tie them down on the trailer Monday afternoon/night. Please do not leave it until Tuesday morning as the buses depart promptly at 8.30am.

A continental breakfast will be provided by our tired Catering Volunteers from 6.30am-7.30am on Tuesday morning.

The bus(es) will depart from the school at 8.30am sharp, travelling in convoy to Cairns. A brief toilet stop will be made at Mt Molloy before continuing on to Cairns. Arrival at the Hospital Foundation office area is expected around 1.30pm. Please note, the bike trailer and luggage truck may arrive an hour later.

All luggage items and bikes should be collected promptly. Anything not collected is left at your own risk. The Foundation is not responsible for storage of any items including bikes.

Otherwise, if alternative transport has been arranged, please have a safe trip back and thank you for participating in the Australian Retirement Trust Cardiac Challenge!

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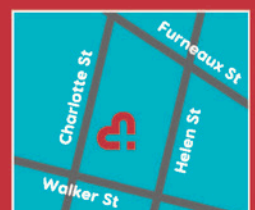


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