



# RIDER GUIDE 2020 **MS** GONG RIDE

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# THE RIDE TO FIGHT MS



## CONTENTS

|                                                 |    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| WELCOME                                         | 1  |
| ABOUT THE MS GONG RIDE                          | 2  |
| WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?                     | 3  |
| MEET MICHELLE AND AARON TAYLOR                  | 4  |
| THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE                         | 6  |
| KICK START YOUR FUNDRAISING                     | 8  |
| DOUBLE YOUR DONATIONS WITH MATCHED GIVING       | 9  |
| TOP 10 FUNDRAISING IDEAS AND INSPIRATION        | 10 |
| CYCLING ETIQUETTE AND RULES                     | 12 |
| MEET YOUR MS GONG RIDE CYCLING COACH BRAD MCGEE | 14 |
| MEET YOUR MS GONG RIDE FUNDRAISING COACHES      | 15 |
| OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT               | 16 |
| GONG MERCHANDISE                                | 17 |

## THANK YOU FOR SIGNING UP TO THE 2020 MS GONG RIDE - THE RIDE TO FIGHT MS

Welcome to the 2020 MS Gong Ride. You are now part of a 39-year legacy, where an incredible community of participants, supporters, donors, and volunteers have together raised over \$42 million to help **Fight MS**.

Every week, more than 10 Australians are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and the average age of diagnosis is just 30 years old.

Thank you for taking on this challenge. It is your support and dedication that ensures no one has to face MS alone, no matter what stage of their journey.

By taking part, you are making sure people living with MS continue to access vital support and services that help them live well at home, at the workplace and in the community.

During the challenges of 2020, our organisation has pivoted its services to ensure people living with MS are supported and have access to services from the comfort of their home.

You can make an impact to Australians living with MS by fundraising.

We are delighted to have you on board for this unforgettable and important ride to Fight MS.



**John Blewonski**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Multiple Sclerosis Limited





## 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 anticipated community bike ride.

For 39 years, tens of thousands of have challenged themselves on this legendary ride, in support of people with multiple sclerosis. By fundraising, you will be committing to make sure over 25,000 Australians are supported on their journey to fight MS.

**More than ever, your support is critical to ensure that no one faces MS alone.** This year, we were met with unprecedented times and the effects of COVID-19 were felt by all. Demand for MS Services doubled during the month of April. MS Services quickly adapted to make sure people living with multiple sclerosis continued to have access to vital support, services and current information.

Through video conference and by phone, we 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.

A host of other services continue to be available remotely, including MS Advisor which provides free, expert advice from qualified nurses and social workers, and our free helpline, MS Connect, which is available five 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.

**This year we're excited to bring some new features to the event.**

Brad McGee, World Champion Cyclist and Olympic Coach, has created a coaching program specifically for riders in the MS Gong Ride. 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 MS Gong Ride 2020!

# WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

- Multiple sclerosis is the **most common neurological condition** among young people.
- The **average age of diagnosis is 30 years** of age.
- Multiple sclerosis is a lifelong disease for which there is **no known cure**.
- **Three out of four people** living with multiple sclerosis **are women**.

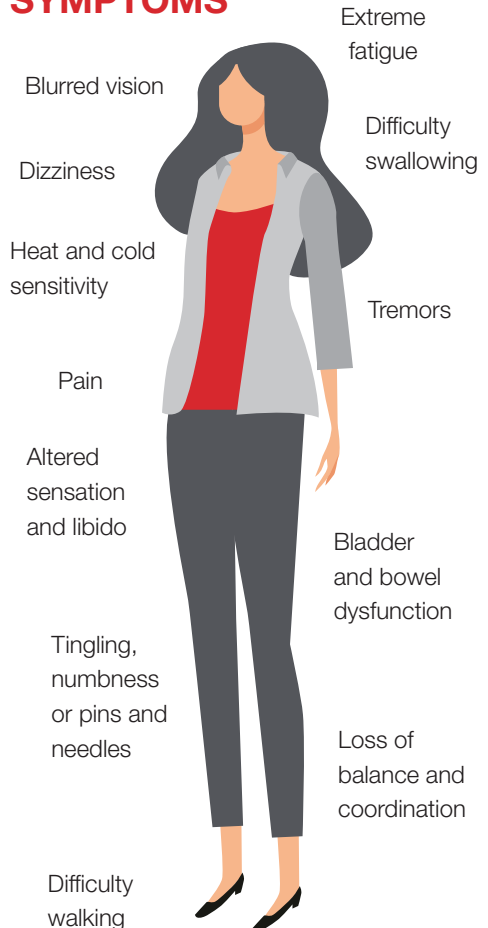


Multiple sclerosis attacks the **central nervous system** – the brain, spinal cord and optic nerves.



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

## SYMPTOMS





Michelle Taylor

## “THE MS GONG RIDE IS PERSONAL”

– MICHELLE AND AARON TAYLOR

Aaron Taylor rode in the MS Gong Ride 2018 because he loved to cycle. He hadn't put a huge amount of thought into what the ride actually meant, and who he was riding for...

It turned out Aaron was riding for his wife.

**Meet Michelle Taylor.** Michelle's battle with MS began in an unbelievable way.

It all started when Michelle broke her ankle in December 2017. After it healed, she then broke it again in December 2018. After each break, she found walking very difficult. With two young children, **Michelle was relying on the help of strangers to help her get to and from her car after school drop-off.**

She also had some other symptoms, that at the time weren't linked to her broken ankle. Michelle was suffering from slurred speech, blurred vision and was unable to perform simple daily tasks such as using a pen to write a shopping list.

She eventually saw a neurologist, who suggested these symptoms were due to an auto-immune condition called Hashimotos disease and prescribed

her a 6 month course of steroids. A few weeks later, Michelle was taking her father to a neurologist for treatment for his Guillain-Barré syndrome. At this stage, the steroids had not helped, so Michelle was using walking sticks to help her get around. To her surprise her father's neurologist told Michelle he would like to check her out too.

Michelle was immediately sent for an MRI, which revealed that she had MS. Suddenly, all the symptoms Michelle had been experiencing for the last 2 years made sense. She had put her inability to walk down to her broken ankle, but it had been the first sign of MS.

There is no cure for MS, and the symptoms are unpredictable which means Michelle has to take things day by day.

**Some days, Michelle is unable to walk.** Her symptoms lessen and worsen depending on the week, and she regularly undergoes infusions to help relieve her symptoms. She also trains at a gym and is working on getting fit and strong! This means she's able to live as normally as possible, going bike riding and taking her children to swimming lessons.

This year, Michelle will be cheering on Aaron and their amazing team of friends and family. Returning for their second year, Team M.I.C.H plan to smash their fundraising goal in 2020 to Fight MS!

**To say thank you for taking on this challenge, Michelle has a message for you.**

"Thank you SO much for riding to fight MS. Watching Aaron cross the finish line has taken on a new meaning for me since I was diagnosed. Your support means I'm not fighting this battle alone. Thank you. You're awesome!"

With your help, we can make sure no one faces MS alone.





## THE DIFFERENCE YOU MAKE

1 in 3 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 2020 to fight MS.



**This year, people will reach out 20,000 times to our helpline MS 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, this free helpline provides information and advice, and links people to MS services. MS Connect helps people from the time they are diagnosed to providing a suite of services and support to help minimise the impact of living with MS.



**More than 1,500 people with MS will receive specialised advice from caring nurses, occupational therapists and social workers through MS Advisor.** Without a long waiting list or needing to travel, MS Advisor helps people with MS wherever they are. Accessible expert consultation is available for free to support people with MS in areas including diagnosis, treatment options, symptom management and mental health.





**Over 2,700 people will participate in MS 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. MS Education shares the latest evidence-based, accurate information on everything from understanding multiple sclerosis, to living well and managing unpredictable symptoms.



**Nearly 600 new people with MS and their loved ones will find social connection through MS Peer Support groups.** By phone, online and in-person, MS Peer Support groups help people with MS, their family, friends and carers, receive free practical and emotional support through facilitated discussions. One to one support is also available with trained MS Peer Support Volunteers, who have MS or have a close connection with someone with MS.



## 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 \$250 to help people fight MS.

### 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.





Did you know? Many companies have a matched giving program and will match 'dollar for dollar' the amount you or your team fundraise for charity.

## 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 MS Nurse Advisor to visit a person 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 letter 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 [msgongride.org.au/matched-giving](https://msgongride.org.au/matched-giving)

For matched giving our company details are: **Multiple Sclerosis Limited, ABN 66 004 942 287.**

### Other options

If your company does not offer matched giving, 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](mailto:events@ms.org.au)

# TOP 10 FUNDRAISING IDEAS AND 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.



## Trivia night

Everyone loves a quiz night! This could be from the comfort of your living room, with friends online, or down at your local pub!

2.



## After work drinks

Great opportunity to tell your colleagues what you are 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.



## Poker night

Get your friends together for a night of fun and play for a cause. Remember to play responsibly and encourage everyone to set a personal limit.

4.



## Silent auction or raffle

Get some prizes donated and you can host a silent auction or raffle, online or in person.

5.



## Set up a bad habits jar

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

6.



## 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.



7.



### Casual day with a twist

Looking forward to returning to work and seeing your colleagues? Why not let them choose what you wear to work in exchange for a donation?

8.



### 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.

9.



### Grooming challenge

Have you been growing an isolation beard? Overdue for a haircut? Now is your chance to use that next grooming session for good! Alternatively, you can get event day ready and host a wax-off challenge.

10.



### Parking spot

Do you have an envied parking spot at work? Consider giving it up for a premium.

If you are planning on hosting an online event, here are some applications that make it easy to get people together: Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts, Facebook Rooms and more! 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.

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Note: For fundraising events and activities, always follow advice from Australian Government regarding COVID-19.

**Please remember to register your fundraising event with us. We'll promptly provide your authority to fundraise certificate and some resources to complement your event!**

**Call 1300 733 690 or  
email [events@ms.org.au](mailto:events@ms.org.au)**

# CYCLING ETIQUETTE AND RULES

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

Whether you are participating in the Virtual, Classic or Ultimate event, 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 Cycling 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

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

This year, social distancing means riders must ensure 1.5m of space at all times.

## 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! Although cycles and hand signals

vary between different cycling groups, we've included some of the most common for you.

### 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!**

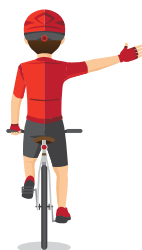
## BICYCLE HAND SIGNALS



◀ LEFT TURN



▶ RIGHT TURN



■ STOP



● SLOW DOWN



▲ GIVE WAY



! ROAD HAZARD



! ROAD HAZARD  
POTHOLES

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



*Pictured left to right, Brad McGee and Stephen 'Papo' Papadopoulos.*

## MEET YOUR MS GONG RIDE CYCLING COACH BRAD MCGEE

Inside your welcome kit you'll find your exclusive 2020 MS Gong Ride six week training program, developed by the legend himself Brad McGee, Australian Olympic Coach and Australian Olympic Gold Medallist.

Keep an eye out for more expert advice, including videos and live-streams, 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



## MEET YOUR MS GONG RIDE FUNDRAISING COACHES - FLEUR AND KAREN

Your fundraising coaches are here to help you to succeed and reach your fundraising goal to Fight MS! Ask Fleur and Karen 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!



*Pictured from left Fleur Huston and Karen Thackray.*

### 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.

Phone: **1300 733 690** | Email: **[events@ms.org.au](mailto:events@ms.org.au)**

## OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

We know that you love the beautiful scenery of the MS Gong Ride and we are introducing new environmental initiatives to ensure it stays that way.



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**Biodegradable  
and compostable**  
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merchandise



**Return and Earn**  
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Finish Village



A new team  
of volunteer  
**Environmental  
Officers**

Visit [msgongride.org.au](https://msgongride.org.au) to find out more and see how you can help!



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