



Cathy Draheim
Volunteer Rescue Association
PO Box 1396
Mudgeeraba NSW 4213

Tuesday 25 November 2008

Dear Cathy,

The 2008 MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride became a history breaking event from the word go and continued to grow to be the biggest in MS event history! On Sunday 2 November 2008 **13,500 riders** jumped on their bikes to pedal for a purpose on what was to be a perfect cycling day.

I would like to **thank you** and all our venue hosts, suppliers, authorities, vendors & caterers who went above and beyond their duty on this event to support people with MS. It has been a privilege working with you. Without you, there wouldn't be a Gong Ride as the success of this event does not just come from getting 'bums on saddles' and raising funds for MS, it's the attention to detail behind the scenes with the wonderful venues, the course planning, equipment provision, delivery and set-up, the delicious refreshments made available on the day to fuel our riders and the kind manner in which you offer your services that each contribute to the success.

There are so many critical elements that make up this event, too many to mention, but rest assured your individual involvement and support of the event is recognised and hugely appreciated.

Funds raised continue to roll in and to date we have reached a massive **\$1,840,154** smashing our **\$1.7M fundraising goal!** These funds will help people with MS by enabling us to offer a wide range of services and equipment to our clients across the ACT, NSW and Victoria. Funds will also assist further the research into the cause of multiple sclerosis.

As you may have heard, during the MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride, Mr Colin Sparke, of Terrigal, tragically passed away as a result of head injuries sustained from an accident while riding. Colin is survived by his wife of 58 years Marie, 10 children and many grandchildren. Unconnectedly, Mr Levi Vaegan of Bellevue Hill, suffered a heart attack during the ride and sadly passed away four days later. His family and friends have confirmed that it was his 20th time participating in the Gong Ride and he simply loved cycling. Through the participation of people like Colin and Levi, the MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride continues to provide funds to help support people living with MS and continue the search for a cure. Our thoughts are with the Sparke family and Vaegan family at this difficult time.

Studdy MS Centre

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Multiple Sclerosis Limited

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The Nerve Centre

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AUSTRALIA

Participant numbers were up on previous years with approx 13,500 riders completing the ride. As sporting events in general are growing in size, we have seen a significant increase in participant numbers on the Gong Ride and whilst this is great for the fundraising side of the event it does create other issues. We are aware of the extra-workload this placed on some shoulders and the hard work and dedication shown during the event is appreciated by the riders and of course the MS Events team. We are already working on ways to relieve congestion and to ensure rider safety to help make the 28th Gong Ride the best yet!

We look forward to the 2009 MS Sydney to the Gong Bike Ride, which will be held on Sunday November 1.

Please pass on this letter and my thanks to other members of your staff who also helped out on, or in the lead up to this year's Gong Ride.

Yours sincerely

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