



## SHIMANO GRAVEL MUSTER STAGE RACE 2026

### COMPETITOR WELCOME PACK

**20 - 23 August in Alice Springs, NT.**

Welcome to the Shimano Gravel Muster Stage Race. We thank you for committing to an epic adventure - one that will test your resolve whilst taking you through an awe-inspiring landscape with a group of amazing people from across Australia.

We are super excited to be spending 4 days together - riding superb outback gravel roads, camping under millions of stars and experiencing the majestic East MacDonnell Ranges

Below is a WELCOME PACK containing all the necessary information to help you prepare for the Stage Race.

Have a read, get excited and feel free to reach out to [info@rapidascent.com.au](mailto:info@rapidascent.com.au) if you have any questions.

We cannot wait to see you in the Red Centre!

*From the Rapid Ascent team*

**Ride it. Race it. Experience it.**

### COMPETITOR SERVICES

A few key competitor service reminders to ensure you've got things correctly planned out:

#### Airport Transfers (to/from)

Airport Transfers (with your bike) are an optional add-on that we can arrange for you\*.

- Add to your entry online [HERE >>](#)
- Or contact [Alice Silver Passenger Services](#) directly yourself.

*\*Those who have booked these transfers will be contact in the next few weeks for flight details.*

#### Your Gear Transported

A reminder that we'll transfer your luggage/gear/camp gear to each of the Outback Stations from Alice Springs, and return (Days 2 - 3 - 4).

*Note: A 15kg limit per person applies. We will give you a 60lt Gravel Muster duffle bag to use.*



#### Accommodation Update

Here are a couple of quick housekeeping reminders:

### Alice Springs (Day 0, 1 & 4)

Gravel Muster entry does NOT include *Alice Springs accommodation*, please ensure you've got somewhere to stay!  
Suggestions in Alice Springs:

- **Mercurie Alice Springs Resort** (Official Event HQ) *30% discount offer!*
  - Day 0 and Day 1 – Wednesday 19 August and Thursday 20 August:
    - [CLICK HERE](#) for discounted rate and to book online. OR email Mercurie directly [HB0K7@accor.com](mailto:HB0K7@accor.com)
  - Day 4 – Sunday 23 August:
    - [CLICK HERE](#) for discounted rate and to book online. OR email Mercurie directly [HB0K7@accor.com](mailto:HB0K7@accor.com)
- **Discovery Parks Alice Springs**. Located 6km south of the town centre (opposite the Brewery!) this is a budget friendly caravan park with cabins and other options.

### Hale River Station (Day 2) and Ross River Station (Day 3)

We leave Alice Springs for 2 nights, staying at remote outback cattle stations in the MacDonnell Ranges on Day 2 and 3 (21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August). Your entry includes a campsite at Hale River and Ross River so you can

- BYO camp gear for zero cost, OR
- book a Rapid Ascent Camp Package (with tent, pillow, mattress and chair), OR
- book any available beds in the Fixed Cabin Accommodation
  - Mid May update:
    - Hale River. The cabins have been fully booked out. Only Rapid Ascent camp packages or BYO camp gear options remain.
    - Ross River. Beds in shared cabins or in a bunkhouse remain available to book (as well as the RA camp package and BYO options)

Please note the following:

- **FIXED ACCOMMODATION:** if you upgraded to Fixed Cabin Accommodation your bed linen is provided.
- **CAMP GEAR PACKAGED:** if you booked an RA camp gear package this includes:
  - a Rapid Ascent tent, swag style camp mattress (10cm thick), chair and a pillow.
  - Please BYO sleeping bag, pillow slip and a towel.
  - Reminder, we transport this gear for you so you don't need to carry your stuff anyway!

Further Details on Accommodation Information – [VIEW HERE >>](#)

### Inclusions

The Stage Race is almost entirely all-inclusive with all meals included once we've left Alice Springs. **View full details on inclusions** [HERE >>](#)

### Summary Of Food / Accom Inclusions:

	STAGE	ACCOMMODATION	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	ON-COURSE RIDING FOOD
<b>DAY 0</b> Wed 19 Aug	-	Stay in Alice Springs (you book)	-	-	-	-
<b>DAY 1</b> Thurs 20 Aug	1	Stay in Alice Springs (you book)	-	-	YES	YES
<b>DAY 2</b> Fri 21 Aug	2	Stay at Hale River Homestead <b>CAMP SITE PROVIDED OR UPGRADE</b>	-	YES	YES	YES
<b>DAY 3</b> Sat 22 Aug	3	Stay at Ross River Homestead <b>CAMP SITE PROVIDED OR UPGRADE</b>	YES	YES	YES	YES
<b>DAY 4</b> Sun 23 Aug	4	Stay in Alice Springs (you book)	YES	YES	YES	YES

## Types of Food Provided:

### Breakfasts:

- Continental and cooked breakfasts with eggs, bacon, toast, choice of cereals and muesli, yoghurt, milk, juices and fresh/preserved fruit. These were great last year 😊

### Lunches:

- Available in the time-out zones. Include choice of: wraps/rolls/baguettes, with a choice of fillings such as roast chicken, salami, feta, roast beef, tuna, roast veges, avocado and more. Plus fruit, bananas and fruit cake.

### Dinners:

- Options include: lasagne, butter chicken, chicken fricassee and pasta, potato and green salads plus fresh rolls, dessert and fruit. Another highlight from last year – you won't go hungry!
- The final presentation dinner held on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August is at the Mercure in Alice Springs. It will also include awards and stories from the event.
- Extra dinner tickets for any non-riding family members or friends who want to join us for any of the evening meals can be purchased [HERE>>](#)

### On-course riding food:

- On course water points will be stocked with a great range of Skratch Labs nutrition including hydration sports drink, bars, chews and electrolyte drinks in 3 flavours. In addition to fruit cake, lollies, chips, water and more.

## **Dietary Considerations – Please let us know any considerations by 5 August:**

Please let us know if you have any dietary considerations by emailing [info@rapidascent.com.au](mailto:info@rapidascent.com.au)

## What's NOT included in the catering provisions:

- Alcohol (a bar will be selling beer and wine at each dinner venue)
- After riding snacks – eg. if you finish riding at 3pm and want something to eat straight away... Hale and Ross River have a café selling limited items, or plan ahead and bring your own.
- Barista Coffee! We know – it's a cardinal sin to run a bike race and not have proper coffee – BUT this is the outback! – so bring your AeroPress or stick to instant!
- Internet and phone coverage is not available at Hale River or Ross River. Enjoy the serenity and the disconnect from the rest of the World. Trust us, it is very refreshing!

## EQUIPMENT

Now is a great time to ensure you have all the equipment you need, and to start training with it and becoming familiar with the items before it is too late.

### **Mandatory Items when riding:**

- First aid kit (minimum contents: 2 x crepe bandages, 6 x wound closure strips, 1 x triangular bandage, 2 x non-stick wound dressing pads and a pair of surgical gloves).
- Safety blanket / space blanket.
- The course route downloaded onto either a bike computer or a mapping app on your phone that works when you are out of phone reception. (If using a phone we recommend either Ride with GPS, Gurumaps or Maps.ME).

### **Recommended Items:**

We recommended a range of other items such as tubes, gas canisters, sunscreen and other items. Read our recommendations [HERE >>](#)

If you have any questions about the items then please contact us.

## BIKE SET UP

The Shimano Gravel Muster travels along gravel roads that vary from smooth 'champagne gravel' to rough and chunky in places. You will often have to 'hunt the road' looking for the smoothest section until it dissolves into another line. There are some patches of loose sand and gravel, some corrugations and general roughness - but on the whole it is all rideable. There are only limited sections that are rocky, rough or sharp. And there are no steep climbs (except for the last 50 meters on Day 1!) or technical descents. It is not a very technical place to ride – the roads are generally hard, long and straight.

### So What Bike And Set Up Do We Recommend? Gravel bikes OR mountain bikes!

#### Recommendations:

- tyres of minimum 40mm width (although the consensus last year was that wider would be better, 50mm much better!)
- standard gearing (like a 2x with 34-11t or 1x with 11-44t). There are no major climbs – the only thing you might have to contend with is rough terrain and a head wind...
- a comfortable ride. 4 solid days on the bike, in harsh conditions is going to knock anyone around – so make sure you love your bike and find it comfortable to ride. (Depending on the corrugations, you may even consider a bike with front suspension if you value comfort.)
- carrying capacity for at least 2 water bottles and whatever extra items you want to carry (refer above)

#### Bike mechanic and repairs

Alice Springs Bicycle Centre are our preferred bike shop and will be supporting us in Alice Springs. Chris will be set up at the Mercure during registration and be able to assist people after Day 1 from his shop in Alice Springs.

At the two Outback Stations, NO mechanic will be available. However we have a decent Super B bike toolkit, pump AND work stand on hand for use. We recommend that you bring whatever spares you might need to help service bikes if required. (eg. spokes, brake pads, gear cable...)

Please contact us with any questions [info@rapidascent.com.au](mailto:info@rapidascent.com.au)

#### SHIMANO

Shimano are great supporters and believers in this event and are attending en-masse. Not just because they love riding but because they believe in cycling adventures like this. Make sure you check out their new GRX Di2 12-speed set up – as well as everything else this incredible brand provides to the bike industry.

<https://bike.shimano.com/en-AU>

Toby from Shimano will be set up to provide mechanical, spares and repairs support at the mid point of each day's ride as well as at the finish line. You are much better to be self sufficient but he's there as a back up.

## TRAINING

Do some. In fact do as much as you can without breaking your bike or pissing off your wife / husband / partner / boss / friends too much!

[Click Here >>](#) for a great resource for your training (originally prepared for our Great Otway Gravel Grind event).

However the emphasis is on YOU to get out the door (or onto the trainer) and pedal your bike as much as is appropriate. Especially doing back-to-back days of riding to replicate the rigours of a stage race.

## STAGE SUMMARY

The Shimano Gravel Muster takes us deep into the outback – where roads disappear into a shimmering horizon with a cloudless blue sky overhead and the rolling red earth beneath your tyres. This is a landscape of subtle changes and brutal reality, where men and women become heroes in the dust or succumb to the unforgiving landscape in a slow demise.

Each day includes a mix of timed and untimed segments – called a ‘rally format’ – that breaks up the day into achievable segments and let’s you sit up and relax as well as test yourself against the man and the land (if you want to!).

### Summary of the stages:

#### Day 1:

- **4km Prologue** (Alice Springs)
- **47km, Simpsons Gap Loop** (Alice Springs to Alice Springs) + Sunset Beers
  - *1 racing segment, totalling 17km*

#### Day 2:

- **148km, The Gardens Road** (Alice Springs to Hale River)
  - *2 racing segments, totalling 84km*

#### Day 3:

- **90km, Arltunga Stage** (Hale River to Ross River)
  - *2 racing segments, totalling 47km*

#### Day 4:

- **95km, The Ringwood Stage** (Ross River to Alice Springs)
  - *1 racing segment, totalling 43km*

***TOTAL: 384km riding total, including 191km of timed racing segments.***

Check out the considerable further information on the event website [HERE>>](#).  
Actual GPX files for each stage will be circulated nearer the event.

## **READY FOR SOME TOURIST ACTIVITIES?**

Why not stay a few extra days and take in the stunning scenery of Alice Springs and surrounds. There are special offers available on accommodation, car hire and activities. You might even consider booking a tour to the West MacDonnell Ranges or doing a hot air balloon ride! Don't miss out on seeing more of what our beautiful country has to offer!

[THINGS TO DO – READ HERE >>](#)



## EVENT T-SHIRT, FIRST AID KITS + MORE...

Want to add the event t-shirt, hoodie or first aid gear to your entry? Or book an extra dinner ticket for non-riding travel partners?

You can do this online by clicking [HERE >>](#)



*(Event T-Shirt and Hoodie are 'PRE ORDER' only with very limited numbers available at the event!)*

## LIMITED-EDITION GRAVEL MUSTER JERSEY FROM PEDLA!

As you probably know, there's bike kit and then there's BIKE KIT. And the Pedla makes some of the best on-bike garments around. That's why we're thrilled to be collaborating with them for the 2026 Gravel Muster.

Pedla have designed some beautiful jerseys and technical rider-tees in long and short sleeves especially for the event and are offering these at a 20% discount to all riders. Match these with some of their new SuperSYSTEM bib's and you'll be the most comfortable rider on the gravel.

- Check out their Gravel Muster range [HERE >>](#)
- USE THE CODE **PEDLA-GM-20** for 20% off retail.



## BONUS! PURCHASE ANY PEDLA KIT FOR 20% OFF!

As part of our partnership with Pedla they are offering a one-off, **20% discount off all full priced kit on their website.** There is no minimum purchase requirement but it's limited to one use per customer and must be activated **before 1<sup>st</sup> August 2026.**

Here is the perfect opportunity to set yourself up with some of the best cycling apparel on the roads.

- Pedla Website [HERE >>](#)
- Use the code: **PEDLA-GM-20**

## CHARITY PARTNER – MASAKA CYCLING CLUB

We are proud to partner with the [Masaka Cycling Club Foundation \(MCCF\)](#) as our official charity partner.

Masaka City lies in central Uganda, where ~300,000 people live with some major social and economic challenges. Out of these challenges, the Masaka Cycling Club has created a remarkable movement of hope, empowerment, and community through the simple joy of the bicycle.

Founded in 2019, the **Masaka Cycling Club Foundation** is a 100% volunteer-run, 100% fan-funded humanitarian project that uses cycling to transform young lives. Supported by riders just like us, the club provides scholarships, nutrition programs, clean water, coaching, and equipment to over 50 children and young riders in a safe, supportive environment.



Many of these riders are now part of elite training pathways endorsed by the UCI (with some incredible riding stats) — and, most importantly, they ride with pride, purpose, and laughter.

**How you can help:** Help us reach our target of 500 financial fans by jump onto the website and committing as little as AUD\$5.00 a month.

- 1) [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the site and make a direct donation
- 2) Visit the Masaka website to learn more about our programs, our partners or to buy a jersey [www.masakacyclingclub.com/support](http://www.masakacyclingclub.com/support)
- 3) Spread the word with other riders who might be interested!

**By supporting MCCF, the Gravel Muster community helps deliver more than bikes — we help deliver opportunity, equality, and hope..**

## SEE YOU SOON!

We are genuinely stoked that you're joining us in the Red Centre for this incredible event. We cannot wait to show you the outback roads, dusty red sunsets and the general awe of the outback as part of this event. So if you have any FOMO-style mates, tell them to come along for the adventure! If you have any questions, then please contact us at any time!

*From the team at Rapid Ascent*

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# SHIMANO

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