

SHIMANO

Gravel
Muster

STAGE RACE

EAST
MACDONNELL RANGES . NT

AUSTRALIA'S
MOST ICONIC
GRAVEL
STAGE
RACE



EVENT PROGRAM

20-23 AUGUST 2026 / EAST MACDONNELL RANGES . NT

Ride it... Race it... Experience it... It is time to Muster it!





WELCOME TO THE SHIMANO GRAVEL MUSTER STAGE RACE!

We are thrilled to welcome you to the heart of the outback, to a timeless landscape where endless skies meet red earth, and the road stretches toward the horizon with quiet promise and challenge.

This is a place of raw beauty and subtle shifts, where every kilometre tells a story and every rider finds their own rhythm. The land will test your spirit, but it will also reward you with a sense of wonder that lingers long after the dust settles.

Yet the Gravel Muster is more than just the ride — it's the community we build out here. Around the campfire, over shared meals, and when pedaling kilometer after kilometer under a burning sun, it's the laughter, stories, and friendships that truly define this event and your experience. Whether you're here to race hard or just soak it all in, out here, we're all in it together.

Thank you for being part of this iconic event. We're honoured to have you riding with us — let the adventure commence.

The Rapid Ascent Team



Welcome from the Northern Territory Government

Welcome to the 2026 Shimano Gravel Muster Stage Race.

This is the Northern Territory at its best, big landscapes, open roads and a sense of adventure you won't find anywhere else. Over the next few days, you'll experience some of the most unique and remote parts of the Red Centre, riding through country that is as challenging as it is spectacular.

But the Gravel Muster is more than just the ride. It's the campfires at the end of the day. The conversations. The connections you make along the way. It's what makes events like this so special, and why people keep coming back.

Our Northern Territory Government is proud to support the Gravel Muster through the events funding program because we know events like this do more than bring people together.

They support local businesses, drive visitation into our regions and showcase the Territory as the best place to live, work, visit and invest.

To everyone taking part, good luck, and take the time to enjoy the challenge, because there is no place quite like the Territory!



The Hon. Marie-Claire Boothby MLA
Minister for Major Events
Minister for Tourism and Hospitality



SHIMANO



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GRX

Di2
DIGITAL INTEGRATED INTELLIGENCE



**UNTETHERED.
UNSTOPPABLE.**

EVENT SCHEDULE

Wednesday 19 August

All Day	Competitors arrive and airport shuttle operates. (Pre purchased only)
5:00pm – 7:00pm	Happy Hour drinks – meet and greet at the Mercure Hotel Bar (optional)

Thursday 20 August

All morning	Competitors arrive and airport shuttle operates. (Pre purchased only)
9:00am – 11:00am	Rider registration – at the Mercure
11:15am	Rider briefing and Acknowledgement of Country – at the Mercure
12:50pm	2.5km Prologue Individual Time Trial - WAVE STARTS - Blatherskite Park
1:30pm	48km Stage 1 - WAVE STARTS – Blatherskite Park
4:30pm – 6:00pm	Sunset drinks – at the Alice Springs Brewery pop-up bar at Flagon Hill
6:30pm	Welcome dinner – at the Mercure, Alice Springs

Friday 21 August

6:45am	151km Stage 2 ROLLING STARTS – at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station
from 6:00pm	Rider's dinner and presentations – at Hale River Homestead

Saturday 22 August

8:00am	90km Stage 3 RACE START – at the Hale River Homestead
from 6:00pm	Rider's dinner and presentations – at Ross River Homestead

Sunday 23 August

8:00am	95km Stage 4 ROLLING START – at the Ross River Homestead
2:00pm – 5:00pm	Post race drinks at the Alice Springs Brewery
from 6:00pm	Presentations dinner and ceremony – at the Mercure, Alice Springs

Monday 24 August

All Day	Competitors depart for home or further tourism
Airport shuttle operates.	(Pre purchased only)

RACE HQ at the Mercure Alice Springs Resort

34 Stott Terrace, Alice Springs. Ph: 08 8951 4545

The Mercure Alice Springs Resort is our Race HQ and will be social hub of the event - everyone is welcome to come and enjoy the facilities whilst we are in Alice Springs on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. This is the location of the Registration, the Rider Briefing and Presentation Dinners.



Additional notes about the Mercure

- Breakfast will be available from 5:00am on Friday 21st
- Guests are able to store your bike boxes and additional luggage at the mercure whilst away from Alice Springs. Put bike boxes in the Coolibah room on Thursday night
- Guests are able to park your cars within the Mercure grounds whilst we are away from Alice Springs.

REGISTRATION

9:00am to 11:00am on Thursday in The Mercure courtyard, on the grass in the middle of the hotel.

At registration you will receive:

- Number plate: attach your number plate to your seat post with the zip ties provided so the number faces backwards.
- Timing chip: attach to your front forks (low down near the axle) with the zip ties provided
- 2x bag tags with your name and race number
- Your Gravel Muster duffle bag (use this as your travel bag that is transported to the stations)
- Sponsored gifts
- Merchandise - pre-purchased and for sale (including gas cannisters so you don't have to fly with them)



RIDER BRIEFING AND WELCOME

11:15am on Thursday in the Mercure courtyard (same location as registration)

All riders are strongly encouraged to attend as we acknowledge the traditional owners of the country, introduce key people involved in the event and provide final event updates and information for the days to come. Spectators welcome.

The briefing will go for approx. 45min so we recommend competitors come to the briefing ready to ride to the stage 1 start straight afterwards. (Prologue starts at 12:50pm and it is a 15min ride from the Mercure).

EVENT CONTACTS

Emergency / serious issues: Sam Maffett, Event Manager 0400 001 786 or John Jacoby, Race Director: 0408 035 261

If we are out of range try our off-site contact in Victoria: Bridget Jacoby, Rapid Ascent Director: 0400 322 884.

COMPETITOR SERVICES

Luggage Transportation

We will take your luggage from Alice Springs to each of the outback stations for you. Please be aware of the following requirements:

- We strongly **request that you use the 60lt duffle bags** we provided at registration! Write your name and race number on the bag tags and attach so we can tell them apart!
- Please keep your luggage to a minimum – leave your bike box and extra items in Alice Springs and only give us what you need.
- If you are not camping there is a 15kg limit per person.
- If you are bringing your own camping equipment then a 25kg limit applies (we cannot carry huge swags, small set ups only)
- Luggage will be collected from the following locations in Alice Springs on Friday 21st
 - The Mercure. Leave at reception by 6:15am
 - The Crowne Plaza. Leave at reception by 6:15am
 - The Day 2 start line at the Telegraph Station at 6:45am
- Luggage will be at the finish line each day ready for you when you arrive
- Luggage will be collected from the Hale River and Ross River stations at 7:30am the morning we depart



Day 1 bag transfer: We will collect items at the day 1 start line to be taken to the day 1 finish (eg. jumper, hat...). Just make sure your name / race number is marked on them.

On site medical team

We will have a specialist emergency doctor and a nurse with us for the duration of the event. They are based in Alice Springs, work in remote area medical retrieval medicine and are very familiar with the challenges of crossing this country. They will generally be located at the 1st and 2nd water points each day before making a base at the finish line for the mid / tail end of the field. Please try and get to them if you need assistance, otherwise we will assist and respond to emergency issues out on the course.

The medical team will be staying with us at the cattle stations and will be available between 5:30pm and 6:30pm at Hale River and at Ross River Stations to provide post race care and advice.

Bike repairs

Alice Springs Bicycle Centre is our preferred bike shop in Alice Springs and we encourage you to head there if you need any last minute bike tuning or spares. Store address: 2/30 Stuart Highway. Ph: (08) 8953 7297

Once we leave Alice Springs will not have a designated mechanic travelling with the event so repairs will be a matter of helping each other. We will have a few emergency spares with us (tyres, tubes, cannisters, chains, brake pads, lube, sealant, gear cables) as well as couple of work stands, decent sized tool kit, floor pumps and other tools. We encourage you to a) make sure your bike is in great working order before you arrive and b) bring whatever spares you think you may need with you.

Shimano service stations

Toby from Shimano will be travelling with the event and will set up a service station at the main water point each day (where lunch is available) and at the finish line each day. He will assist riders with any basic mechanical issues and problems - especially if you're rolling with Shimano componentry!! He is a great resource and this is a reflection of their care for riders and connection to this event.

SHIMANO

Krush Bike Wash

We will have bottles of the Krush bike wash and a bunch of rags so you can clean your bike at the end of each day.



Airport Transfers (to/from)

Airport shuttles booked through Rapid Ascent will be conducted by [Alice Silver Passenger Services](#) who can take your bike as well:

- Arrival - They will be at the airport on the 18th and 19th ready to pick you up if you have supplied your flight number.
- Departure - They will collect you from your hotel based upon the flight details you've given them.

FREE Professional photos during the event

We have local professional photographer James Tudor to shoot photos during the event. James will be at different sections of the course each day to capture you in action, then upload his photos to a shared album – FOR YOU TO DOWNLOAD AND SHARE.

Photos will be accessible on the [BossFotos website HERE](#) <https://tinyurl.com/46m62cfy>

Simply click link 'add a selfie'* and you will be shown ALL the photos YOU feature in.

- For support finding or downloading your photos please contact info@bossfotos.com directly.
- Bossfotos and Forktail protects your privacy by not storing selfies and not linking names to faces

WEATHER

The climate in Alice Springs for the month of August is generally very pleasant – although it can still get very warm when you are outside, exercising in full sun with no shade (the 2024 event was 35deg every day!). Equally so, it can get very cold overnight and in the mornings. We recommend wearing multiple layers and adjusting to suit. Also be wary of sunburn and dehydration, it is a very dry and arid heat that sucks the moisture from you. Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses and lip saver are a must.

Avg daily max 25°C Avg night min 6°C Avg rainy days 3.1 Avg cloudy days 7.6 Ave sunrise 6:55am / Sunset 6:20pm

SAFETY IN ALICE SPRINGS

Alice Spring is a wonderful, vibrant city with a big history. But just like most cities it has its difficulties and social issues that visitors need to be aware of. Here are some tips to help ensure your safety whilst in the area:

- We are firmly of the belief that the town is safe in the daytime. Normal precautions apply but its generally fine.
- Do not go out solo at night, don't go into the CBD after dark. If you have to be out after dark then remain with others.
- Be aware of personal effects when in town – don't leave your bikes unattended. Store them in your room when not riding.
- Use common sense and simply be aware of your surroundings.

Alice Springs has received a lot of bad publicity over the last year or two which has amplified people's awareness of the issues within the community. But in the most part the situation is not especially different to how it always is, and how many multicultural cities around the world are. It is safe provided you use a bit of common sense. The recommended accommodation is all gated and secure, and the event schedule means you do not need to be out after dark by yourself. And once we've left Alice Springs we'll have the whole continent to play with day and night because the bush areas are safe.



EXPLORE OUR BEERS

Our range of beers are made for the thirsty. And we know a thing or two about being parched here at our brewery in Alice Springs.

Take your pick of quenchers - Summer Ale, American Pale Ale, Australian Pale Ale, Mid-strength Lager, Stout, IPA, Double IPA, Sour Beers and our ever popular non-beers, a Hard Ginger Beer & Hard Lemonade.

All handcrafted at the one and only independent brewery in Alice Springs.

39 PALM CIRCUIT, ALICE SPRINGS



SOCIAL SCENE AND PRESENTATIONS

A range of social functions are scheduled to ensure you have a great time off the bike as well as on! Nightly meals will be had together and will include a short presentation of the day's results to announce category winners as well as some spot prizes that anyone can win. Supporters welcome, however any non-riders need to pre-purchase meal tickets from Rapid Ascent contact us via e-mail ASAP on info@rapidascent.com.au.

Wednesday 19th

5:00pm – 7:00pm. Meet the Race Directors and event staff - at The Mercure bar.

This is a great chance to meet the Rapid Ascent team and your fellow riders to chat about the race ahead.

6:30pm onwards. Dinner available at the Mercure's restaurant or head to the Alice Springs Brewery for a feed.

Congregate with other riders for a pre-race dinner - both venues recommended.

Thursday 20th

4:30pm – 6:00pm Alice Springs Brewery pop-up bar.

Located right at the end of the stage on a hill 'out west' of town. Free beers on us to welcome you to the Red Centre.



6:30pm onwards. Event buffet dinner at The Mercure + Stage 1 presentations

A hearty buffet will be served outdoors on the grass - a great chance to meet other competitors and fuel up for the riding to come.

Friday 21st

6:00pm onwards. Riders' dinner + Stage 2 presentations

Regroup with friends old and new as we celebrate the end of a huge day with a casual BBQ buffet and beers around the campfires.

Saturday 22nd

6:00pm onwards Rider's dinner + stage 3 presentations

Ross River Homestead is in a beautiful setting with the cliffs of the Gorge all around us and we'll host another memorable (and filling) buffet dinner under the stars.

Sunday 23rd

2:00pm – 5:00pm Alice Springs Brewery finish line celebrations

The finish line is in the middle of the beer garden making this a great way to celebrate our return to civilisation!

6:00pm onwards Presentation dinner at The Mercure + final presentations

This is a must-attend event as we celebrate the end of an incredible 4 days of riding in the Red Centre with a hearty buffet, great stories and good times outdoors at the Mercure.

ACCOMMODATION

As the event moves from point to point, here is a summary of the various accommodation locations:

- Before and including Thursday 20th - accommodation in Alice Springs - riders book your own.
- Friday 21st - at Hale River Station
- Saturday 22nd – at Ross River Station
- On and after Sunday 23rd - accommodation in Alice Springs - riders book your own.

General notes about Hale River and Ross River Stations.

1. First - these are outback cattle stations who also host some camping and accommodation. This is definitely NOT 5 STAR ACCOMMODATION. There are toilets, showers, electricity, food, drinks... but we can't guarantee that everything will work all the time.
2. Second - you'll probably go to bed with grit between your toes, sand in your hair and dust in your eyes - be ready for it because that is what life in the outback is like. Get ready to rough it a bit!
3. Third - what we can guarantee is a great sense of satisfaction and awe at your surroundings and the people you're experiencing it with. This is why you're here - to revel in the differences and the challenges it brings, becoming a better person as a result.

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When staying at either Hale River or Ross River Stations, riders will be accommodated via one of pre-booked options explained below. See the camp captain when you arrive and we'll get you sorted.

- **In a room or cabin.** These are all pre-allocated - we will show you where you are staying. Linen, bedding and towels provided.
- **In a Bunkroom** (Ross River only). You must BYO sleeping bag and pillow slip.
- **BYO camp gear.** You must bring all your own camping gear (tent, mattress, sleeping bag...) and we will show you where to set it up within the camping area.
- **Rapid Ascent provided camping gear.** To be set up in the camping area. BYO sleeping bag and pillow slip.

Further details for those using Rapid Ascent camping equipment (approx ~30 people are camping in our RA camp gear!):

- We will provide you with a 2-man tent, a comfortable 10cm thick mattress, a pillow and a camp chair each.
- **SET UP:** We will have a number of tents set up when you arrive - especially for riders who are totally spent. If you have the energy to help us pitch your tent that'd be very much appreciated
- **PACK UP:** Equally so, we'd really appreciate it if you help us pack down your tents if you can. We're 100% there to help as well.



General notes about facilities:

- All riders have equal access to the shared facilities – such as toilets, showers, the pool and more.
- Please be **VERY WATER CONSCIOUS!** We are in an arid area and water is very precious.
- The cabins at Ross River are 700m away from the camping and dining area – the event centre will be based at the camping area
- It can be very cold out in the desert at night so bring plenty of warm clothes for the evenings / nights.
- There are a number of hiking trails and places to explore surrounding each station – ask the camp captain for some ideas
- There will be designated power points to charge your phones, bike computers, lights... Please bring your own USB boxes and leads. (We also recommend bringing 1-2 power banks and using those instead of the mains power)
- There is zero phone reception and very little if any WIFI at either station. We will have a Starlink if any emergency communications are needed.
- Feel free to grab a chair and hang out at the bar / campfire / dining area and make yourselves at home!

MEALS

Refer to the table below to see what meals are provided by us (basically all the meals once we leave Alice Springs):

A summary of the meals provided includes:

- **Breakfasts:** breakfasts are provided when you are staying at the outback stations on day 3 and day 4. These will be cooked breakfasts with eggs, toast, cereals, fruits... with sufficient food to get you down the road.
- **Lunches:** we will have a packed lunch for you at the main water points on day 2, day 3 and day 4. This will include things like healthy wraps, bakery products and fruit. See the course description text to see which water point will have the lunches.
- **Dinners:** all dinners during the event are provided on day 1, 2, 3 and 4. These will be large buffet style functions with range of protein and carb based meals. Yum.
- **Riding snacks:** A range of Skratch hydration and nutrition products will be available to keep you sustained whilst on the bike including high carb / electrolyte drinks, bars and chews as well as cake, lollies, fruit and more at the checkpoints. You are welcome to bring your own if you have brands and products you prefer.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	On-course snacks
DAY 1 Thur 22 Aug	-	-	YES	YES
DAY 2 Fri 23 Aug	-	YES	YES	YES
DAY 3 Sat 24 Aug	YES	YES	YES	YES
DAY 4 Sun 25 Aug	YES	YES	YES	YES

What's NOT included:

- 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 cafés selling very 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 after all!). Pack your AeroPress or stick to instant!

MASAKA CYCLING CLUB

Our Official Charity Partner



The Shimano Gravel Muster is proud to support the Masaka Cycling Club Foundation (MCCF) as our official charity partner.

Based in Uganda, MCCF is a volunteer-run, fan-funded organisation that uses cycling to create opportunity for young people in a region still affected by the social and economic impacts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Founded in 2019, the foundation provides scholarships, nutrition, clean water, coaching and cycling equipment to more than 50 children and young riders. Several riders have progressed into elite UCI-endorsed development pathways, while the club is also helping break down gender barriers by supporting a growing number of young female cyclists.

MCCF is powered entirely by volunteers and supporters, with no administration costs, ensuring donations directly benefit its riders and programs.

How you can help:

Scan or click the QR code to donate, become a supporter from just AUD\$5 per month, purchase a Masaka jersey or share the foundation's story with your cycling community.

We will have Ross Burrage, one of the key founders and supporters of the MCCF with us for the duration of the Gravel Muster - have a chat to him about the work they do and how you can get involved. By supporting MCCF, the Gravel Muster community helps deliver more than bikes - we help deliver opportunity, equality, and hope.



- drink when thirsty
- don't drink when not thirsty

skratch LABS
hydration
SPORT DRINK MIX

Hydrates faster than water

lemon + lime

90% of electrolytes in sweat is sodium

real athletes.
real food. ← always

We use science to inform what will help your body perform its best. We use nature to make it taste as good as possible so you'll enjoy it. Nobody knows your body better than you. But nobody knows sports nutrition better than us. The human body is complex but the solutions to help it perform aren't. We follow this rule when we create products that solve problems and simple ingredients that each have a purpose !!

w: skratchlabs.com.au - p: 02 9417 5755

THE RACE COURSES

The riding in Central Australia has to be seen to be believed, with slow but subtle changes it's a captivating landscape that has plenty of variety, interest and awe. We look forward to showing it to you.

THE ROADS

The route has lots of variety, from wide gravel 'highways' offering multiple lines to narrower double tracks that take more concentration. In the most part we're on very well formed 2WD roads that offer a generally smooth surface and that can be ridden at speed. There are sections of corrugations, loose sand and more rocky terrain where you need to watch your wheel - you will 'hunt the road' looking for the smoothest line. This is harsh riding and on the whole the roads are 'hard' with little give in them.

RACE VS CRUISE STAGES

Each day includes a number of timed and untimed segments – we call it a Rally Format. This allows you test your mettle against each other during the timed sections, and then slow down, socialise and savour the experience during the cruise sections. Some people will ride the timed and untimed sections at the same speed – that's totally fine as well! The race results each day will be determined by your total time in the timed sections only, including the prologue.

The start / end of each section will be marked with signs saying Start / End of Time Section, as well as timing equipment to record your progress.

NOTE: the timing equipment does not span the whole width of the road so you must keep left to go over the timing mats!



COURSE MARKING

The course will be lightly marked as follows:

- Junctions will be marked with large red arrows and pink tape
- Markings will only be at junctions – there will not be any intermediary markings between junctions
- If you get to a junction that is not marked eg. a 4WD track crosses the more main 2WD road - then continue on the main road. Any turns off the most main road will be clearly marked.
- If in doubt at any time then CHECK THE MAPS ON YOUR PHONE / BIKE COMPUTER!

MAPPING AND GPS FILES

All competitors MUST have the map for ALL 4 STAGES loaded onto either a bike computer or a mapping app on your phone that works when offline. We recommend riders use the RIDE WITH GPS app because i) the maps display the water pts and segment start / finish as well, ii) the maps work when out of reception* iii) they are rider friendly with a heap of features like elevation profiles, surface type and allow GPX exports.

Follow these steps to download all stages for off-line usage with Ride with GPS:

1. download the Ride with GPS app, log in to create a profile
2. [CLICK HERE https://tinyurl.com/mst5eeba](https://tinyurl.com/mst5eeba) to access the Gravel Muster event or scan this QR code
3. click the 3 dots at top right corner and click 'Download Routes'. Keep the app open while they download



That's it! You can access the course for each day under the 'Events' icon on the app home page. You do not need to be a paid subscriber or anything else. We recommend becoming familiar with the app before the races commence.

GPS FILES: You can also download the GPX files for each stage from Ride with GPS so you can import them into your bike computer or other mapping apps. (Open the map for each stage then select 'export GPX file').

WATER POINTS

Numerous water points will be set up along each stage with support and assistance available from staff and volunteers. Waterpoints located in untimed sections will be more substantial than those set up in a timed section. All water points will be manned.

Waterpoints will be up to 30km apart so we definitely recommend riders take plenty of hydration and nutrition with you in between water points. If you have your own preferred race nutrition then you should carry that with you. Your luggage and other personal items will not be available at the water points so you should start (and end) the day with all the clothing, spares and extra items you need for the whole day.

Waterpoints will consist of the following:

- Water and Skratch Hydration Sports Drink powder so you can mix your own
- A range of Skratch nutrition products including bars and chews
- Fruit cake, lollies, chips, shapes, bananas and other basic foods
- Squirt Bike Lube
- Sunscreen...

skratch LABS

Shimano Service Station – Toby from Shimano will be at the principle water point each day and can provide (limited) mechanical support to help keep you on the road. See notes on page 5 for more.

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MANDATORY GEAR AND SAFETY

We take the safety of all participants, volunteers, staff and stakeholder very seriously. Please be aware of the following requirements:

Mandatory gear to be carried by all riders – this forms part of the race rules:

- A rear facing red flashing light that is operating for ALL stages
- A safety / space blanket and first aid kit (minimum contents: 2 x crepe bandages with minimum 70mm width, 6 x wound closure strips, 1 x triangular bandage, 2 x non-stick wound dressing pads and a pair of surgical gloves).
- 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 Ride with GPS).

Start / finish / withdrawals / cut offs:

- All riders **MUST GET YOUR NUMBER TICKED OFF** with the Start Official 10mins prior to the start of each day.
- Riders must start within 5 mins of the advertised start time.
- If you withdraw for any reason you **MUST** advise a marshal ASAP. This is really important as otherwise you will be assumed missing and a search will be commenced.
- Riders must roll through the finish line at the end of all stages and **REPORT IN TO THE FINISH MARSHAL**.
- **CUT OFFS:** All riders must be off the course by 1845 each day (this is 30mins after sunset). If you are not at the finish by this time we will come looking for you (or leave you for the dingos...!?).

Other notes:

- Normal road rules apply at all times. All roads remain open to other users and we will see some other cars.
- We will have sweep vehicles to collect up the dead and those who have major mechanicals of the bike or body.
- There is no mobile phone reception outside of 10km from Alice Springs, so if you have an incident and need our support we suggest following these steps:
 - Alert other riders that you need help. Note your specific location (eg. the km point into the course.)
 - Ask someone to remain with the injured whilst others continue to one of the water points for assistance (remember that the nearest help may be behind you).
 - If remaining in place, ensure you have sufficient clothing, food and water... move into some shade.

SELF CARE - It's up to YOU

Rapid Ascent provides a 'duty of care' over all competitors, volunteers and stakeholders. We will ensure that the race is run as it is described, with water, support and assistance as explained in this event program. Where conditions are beyond 'normal' (e.g. hotter than 32 deg) we will extend our duty of care over participants to help you handle the conditions.

BUT it is also up to YOU the participants to use common sense and take care of yourselves and each other. YOU are ultimately responsible for yourself so think and act carefully, for example, making sure you: have sufficient hydration with you to get to the next waterpoint, dress appropriately for a long day in the sun, eat and drink enough before, during and after each stage, handle yourselves correctly if you are hot, care for your wrists and other contact points so you handle the distance... etc.

Make no mistake, the course is hard, you will get hot and be deeply challenged - especially with the cumulative effect of 4 days of riding. This event may well break you down but it'll rebuild you stronger, wilder and with a sparkle in your eye and the knowledge that you have what it takes. Ride it. Race it. Experience it. You CAN muster it.

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Here is a summary of each day, identifying water points, timed sections and more. All distances are +/- 5km.

DAY 1: ITT prologue

When: Thursday 20th August, Wave starts from 12:50PM.

Total Distance: 2.6km (10m ascent). [Ride with GPS map and profile HERE.](#)

Start / Finish Line: Next to the BMX track in Blatherskite Park, (5km south of Mercure). [Red Centre BMX on Google Maps.](#)

Riding surfaces: Mix of gravel roads, double track and CX twisties.

Race format: Individual time trial – your total time around the course is your race time. Your time for the prologue is included in your overall GC results.

Start process: Riders will be set off in number order according to your race plate, one rider every 15 sec.

Course record: Sam Fox 3.59, Sophie Byrne 4.39

A short prologue will be conducted as a precursor to stage 1 to let riders get warmed up AND to determine a seeding position for the wave start groups for stage 1 (see below). Feel free to race the prologue if you want to start in a faster start group for stage 1, or simply cruise the prologue and use it as a way to check your bike and body before the riding to come.

The course will go around the perimeter of Blatherskite Park, following a range of internal gravel roads, rougher double track and hopefully a lap of the BMX track! The course will not be overly technical and the whole prologue is conducted with a friendly, welcoming atmosphere as we cheer on each rider around the course.

(NOTE: the course may be a bit different to what's on the map and GPX file...)



DAY 1: Simpsons Gap loop

When: Thursday 20th August. Wave starts from 1:30PM.

Total Distance: 47km. 210m ascent. [Ride with GPS map and profile HERE.](#)

Start Line: Next to the Red Centre BMX Track, Blatherskite Park (5km south of The Mercure). [Red Centre BMX on Google Maps.](#)

Finish Line: At our pop up bar on 'Flagon Hill' – Larapinta Dr (6km west of Mercure). [Located here on Google Maps.](#)

Day 1 bag transfer: We will receive items at the day 1 start line to be taken to the day 1 finish (eg. jumper, hat...). Just make sure your name / race number is marked on them.

Riding surfaces: 10km gravel roads, 21km asphalt road, 16km sealed bike path

Ride sheet:

- 0 - 30km pt: untimed segment - mix of sealed and gravel roads
- 30km - 47km: timed segment along the 'Simpsons Gap Bike Path' to the Flagon Hill.

Water points:

1. 11.5km pt at Firing Range – untimed.
2. 29km pt at Simpsons Gap – just before the start of the timed segment.

Course record: Tasman Nankervis 28.07, Jenny Pettenon 32.07

Start process: Riders will be set off in waves of 5 every 30 seconds. Start groups will be according to the results of the ITT Prologue. Fastest riders starting first.

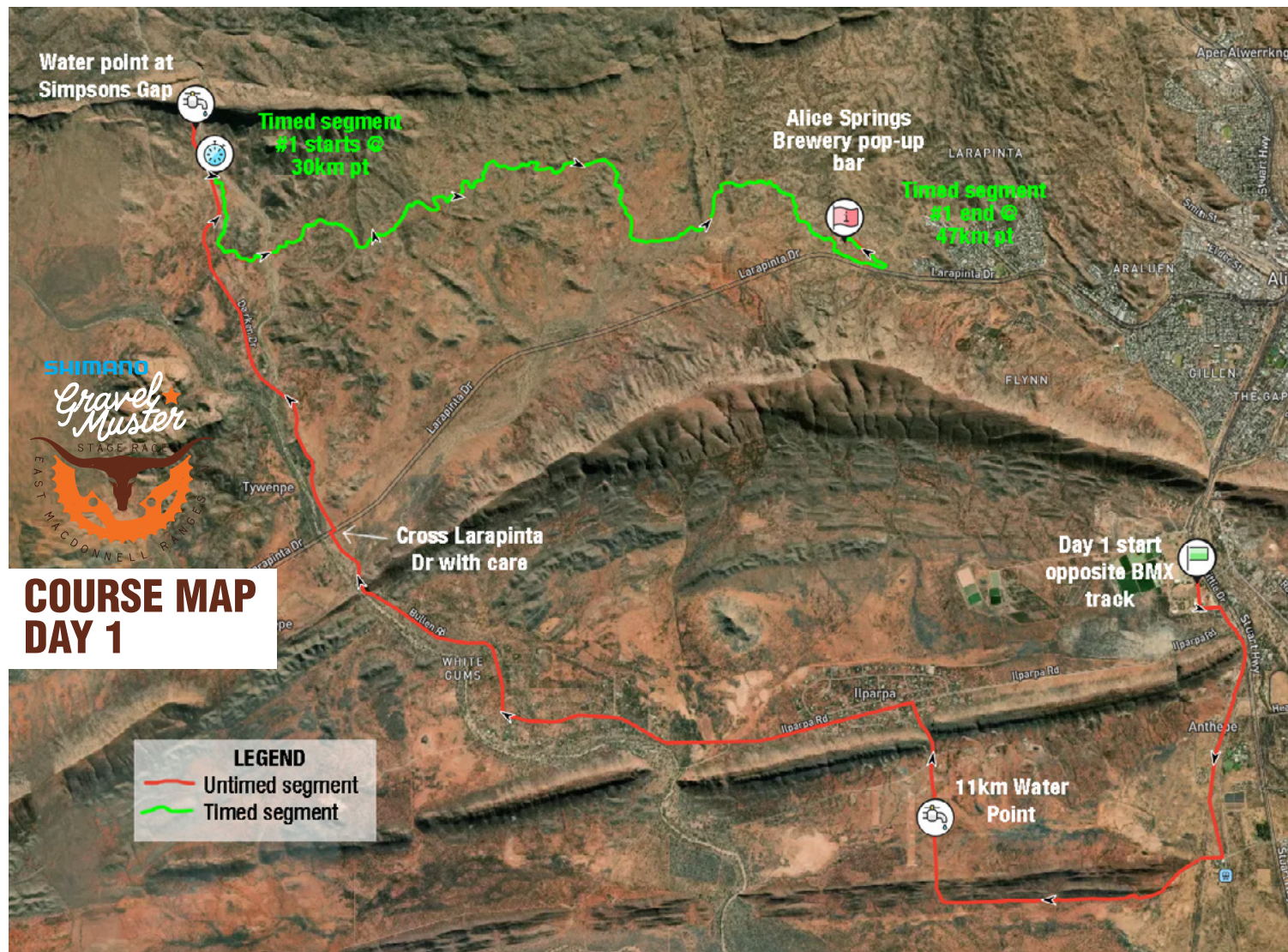
Stage 1 should be ridden as a warm-up and provides the opportunity to turn the legs over, check the local scenery and visit one of the regions iconic landmarks at Simpsons Gap, with a single racing segment at the end.

The stage will commence with wave starts of 5 riders every 30 seconds based on your time from the prologue, with the fastest riders starting first. (The wave starts are designed to spread out the field and ensure safety when everyone is eager to go!)

Once under way riders cruise south, going along some of the local gravel tracks at the base of the range. You'll change from one side of the ridge to the other via Honeymoon Gap and continue on asphalt to the impressive Simpsons Gap, all in a non-competitive, social atmosphere. (We strongly encourage you to walk the 500m to Simpsons Gap because this is one of the region's most spectacular natural landforms)

Day 1's timed segment is along the sealed Simpson's Gap Bike Path that weaves through the bushland well away from any roads or urban environments towards Alice Springs before a final 1km gravel kicker to the top of Flagon Hill. Riders start the segment whenever you like and may race solos or in groups. Note, the bike path is open to the general public and other cycle users, so please ride with care. Note the final hill to the finish may require a short section of hike a bike!!

We'll set up the Alice Springs Brewery pop-up bar on Flagon Hill and share a free beer or two as we watch the sun going down and celebrate day 1 being done.



*This is Simpsons Gap
- just a bit past the car
park and the water point*



DAY 2: The Garden Road

When: Friday 21st August. STARTING AT 6:45am

Total Distance: 151km, 460m ascent. [Ride with GPS map and profile HERE.](#)

Start Line: Alice Springs Telegraph Station car park, 87 Herbert Heritage Dr. Search for [Telegraph Station on Google Maps.](#)

Finish Line: Hale River Homestead

Riding surfaces: 101km gravel road, 49km asphalt road

Ride sheet:

- 0km - 49km pt: untimed segment – sealed road.
- 49km – 97km: timed segment #1 (48km). Western end of The Garden Rd to the Pinnacle Rd water point.
- 97km – 116km: untimed segment (19km).
- 116km – 150km: timed segment #2 (35km). Eastern end of The Garden Road to Hale River Homestead and the finish line.

Water points:

1. 49km pt at Gardens Rd Junction – untimed
2. 74km pt at roadside – timed
3. 97km pt at Pinnacle Rd Junction – untimed. MAIN WATER PT: Lunch available here + Shimano Service Station
4. 129km pt at roadside – timed

Course record: Tasman Nankervis 2:29.37, Sophie Byrne 3:02.00 (The timed section was 10km longer in 2024)

Start process: Riders will be set off in groups of ~20 every 2 mins. Groups will be according to day 1 results. Fastest starting first (These start waves are to divide into smaller, safer pelotons on the Stuart Highway. It is hoped that riders will remain in these groups until the timed section commences).

Stage 2 is the BIG ONE – where heroes are made in the red dust of the desert. Today is all about becoming at one with the bike, the landscape and yourself. The stage rolls out from the historic Telegraph Station with a series of wave starts where groups of approx 20 riders will commence every 2 minutes. Groups will be fastest to slowest based on the results from day 1.

Once under way the stage heads 49km up the asphalt Stuart Highway where we will provide an escort and maintain your safety with lead and tailing vehicles in a non-competitive environment. This is a great way to start a solid stage, cruising up the main road as a peloton whilst the sun rises and the landscape reveals itself.

At the 49km point we turn east onto the famous Garden Road – a long, wide and flat ribbon of dirt leading over the horizon.... The Garden Road leads 100km east to our destination at Hale River and will be broken up with 3 water points and 2 race segments. The 97km mid way water point will have lunch available. All up, this is a long stretch so it will be worth getting in a bunch and power along this together, marvelling at the landscape and the trail of dust kicked up behind you as we race across the centre of the continent. Clip in, look up and enjoy the ride (it's amazing)...

#NoWaterNoWorries



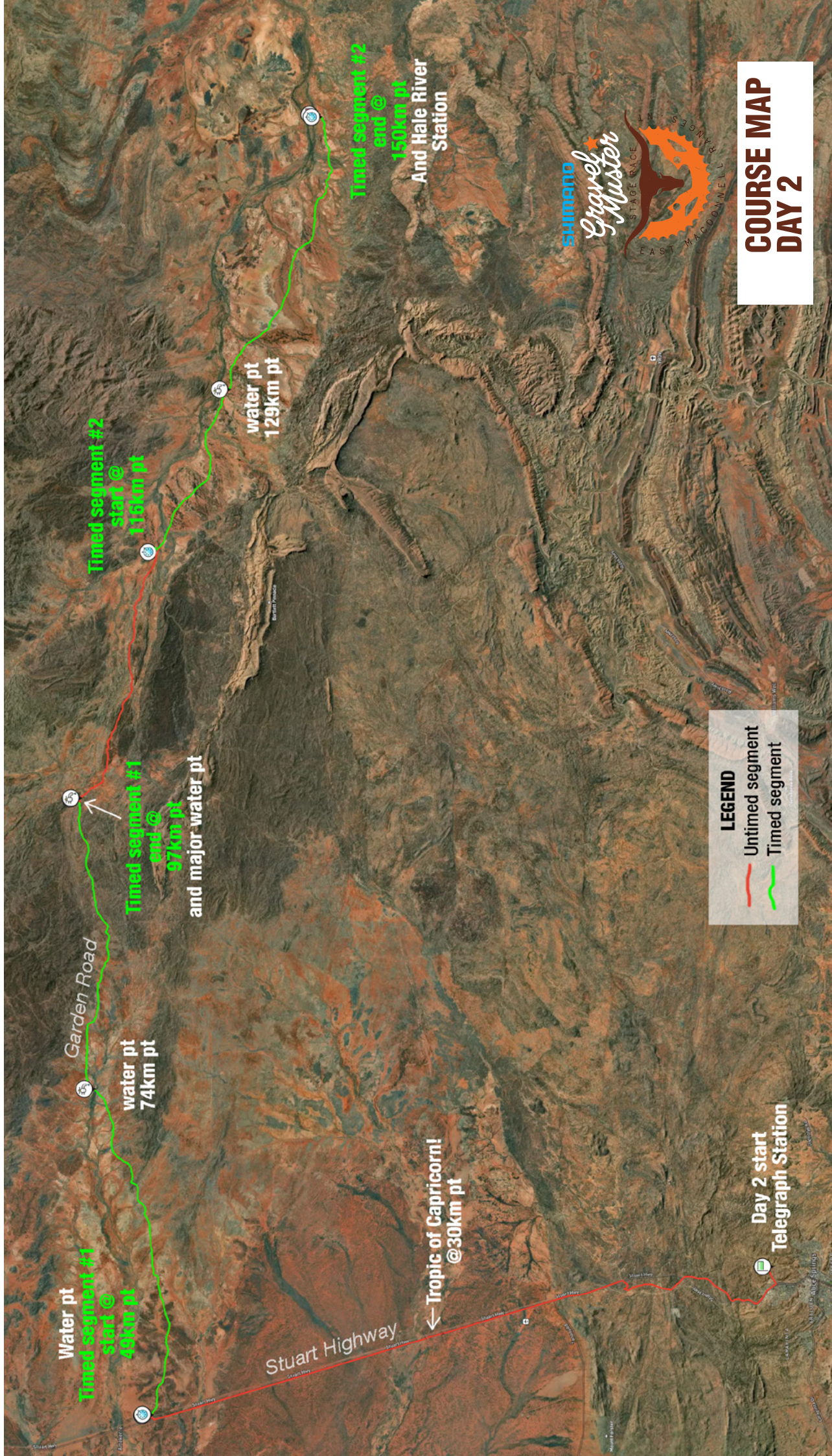
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COURSE MAP
DAY 2

DAY 3: Arltunga

When: Saturday 22nd August. STARTING AT 8:00am

Total Distance: 90km, 380m ascent. [Ride with GPS map and profile HERE.](#)

Start Line: Hale River Homestead

Finish Line: Ross River Homestead

Riding surfaces: 73km gravel road, 17km asphalt road

Ride sheet:

- 0km – 17km pt: timed section #1 – ends near the Arltunga Historic Reserve
- 17km – 35km pt: untimed section (20km) – past the Arltunga Pub where you can buy a muffin and a coffee!
- 35km – 69km pt: timed section #2 (34km). Into Trepina Gorge campsite.
- 69km – 90km pt: untimed section (23km). Back along the Ross River Highway to Ross River Station and the finish line.

Water points:

1. 24km pt at Arltunga pub – untimed
2. 35km pt on cattle plain – untimed + Shimano Service Station
3. 69km pt at Trepina Gorge – untimed. MAIN WATER PT: Lunch available here

Course record: Sam Fox 1:23.33, Jenny Pettenon 1:33.43

Start process: Day 3 will commence with a mass racing start with everyone starting together.

Day 3 in many ways is the jewel of the event thanks to the diversity and sense of journey it provides through a range of breathtaking landscapes. Commencing with a mass start racing segment we ride past Ambalindum Station and its working cattle yards and then turn south to 'climb' onto the Arltunga Plateau. The racing segment finishes amidst the historic ruins and open air museum of Arltunga – which was one of Central Australia's most significant settlements back in 1887! (it is well worth stopping in to read the signs and imagine what it would have been like to mine for gold and gems here nearly 150 years ago!). Then it's a cruise to the Arltunga Pub for our first water point and social catch up.

(The Arltunga Pub is a classic from years gone by and has just been renovated with a modern touch. They will have beers, cold drinks, tea and coffee available to buy as well as pies, toasties, banana cake and more. Pull up a pew and enjoy the serenity!).

From the Bush Pub through to Trepina Gorge we ride into the heart of the East MacDonnell Ranges, with rugged mountain peaks looming up on the horizon and sheer rock faces and cliffs creating a vertical dimension in a very horizontal landscape. The 2nd timed segment commences in the plains and will see you racing across dry river beds and majestic ghost gums, past ridgelines and timeless rock formations. Take care turning onto the sealed Ross River Highway and the Trepina Gorge Rd as these areas see more traffic than we're used to. The timed stage continues all the way to the Trepina Gorge campsite – where lunch will be available.

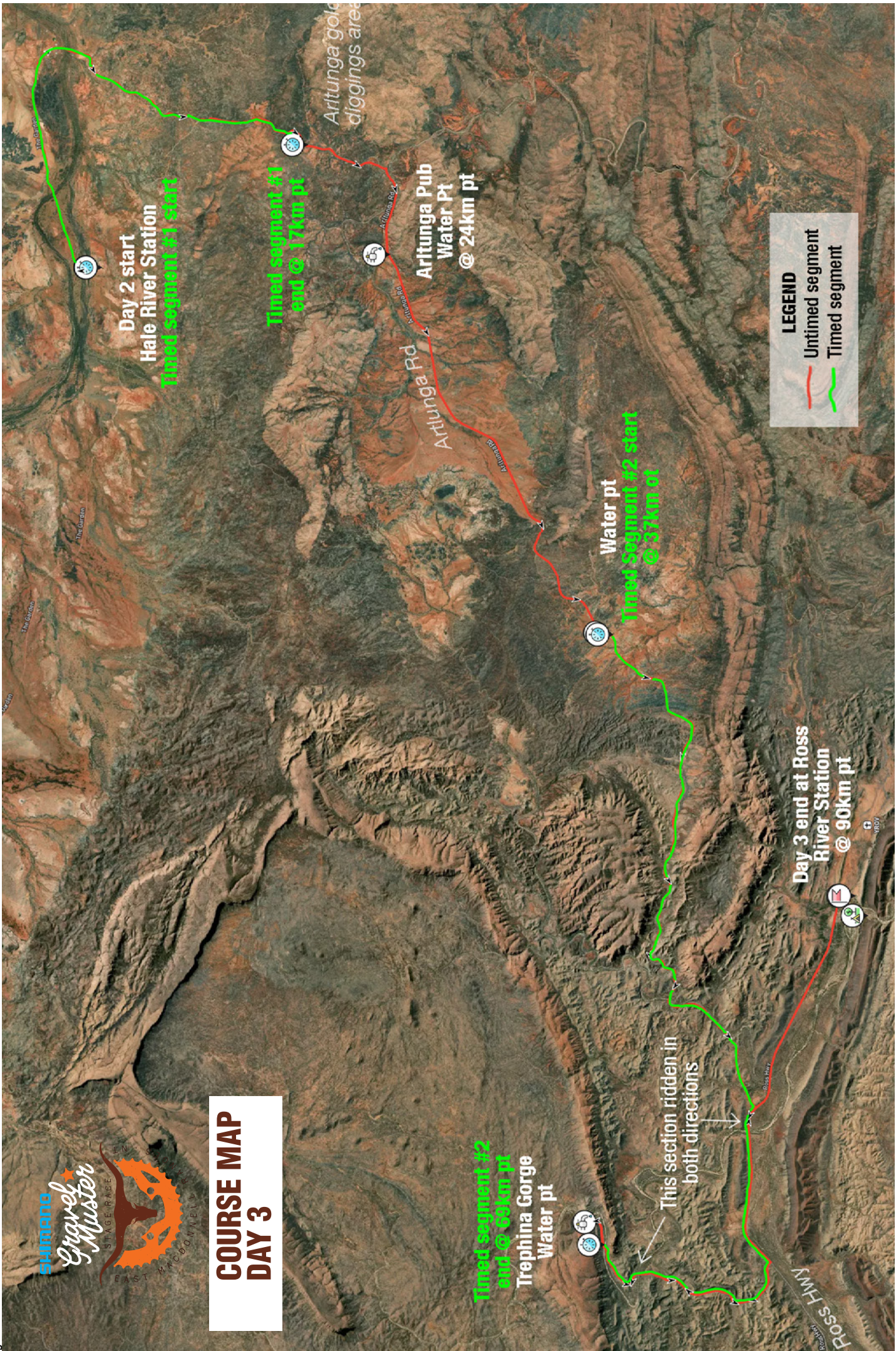
We encourage you to wander into the spectacular Trepina Gorge area and take in the rocky ridgelines over lunch. Then it's an easy 21km cruise from here to camp at the renowned Ross River Homestead.

*This is Trepina Gorge
- a short walk past the water
point at the road end.*





**COURSE MAP
DAY 3**



DAY 4: The Ringwood Roubaix

When: Sunday 24rd August. STARTING AT 8:00am

Distance: 94km, 310m ascent. [Ride with GPS map and profile HERE.](#)

Start Line: Ross River Homestead / **Finish Line:** Alice Springs Brewery (6km south of The Mercure)

Riding surfaces: 65km gravel road, 29km asphalt road

Ride sheet:

- 0km – 22km pt: untimed section – ends at the Numery Rd junction.
- 22km – 64km pt: timed section #1 (42km) – along the Numery Rd to the junction with the Ross Highway.
- 64km – 95km pt: untimed section (19km). Along the Ross Highway to the Alice Springs Brewery.

Water points:

1. 22km pt at Ross River junction – untimed + Shimano Service Station.
2. 64km pt on Ross Highway / Numery Rd junction – untimed.
3. 76km pt at Jesse Gap – untimed. MAIN WATER PT: Lunch available.

Course record: Tasman Nankervis 1:03.05, Ella Bloor 1:17.0

Start process: Day 4 will commence with a mass rolling start with everyone starting together.

Stage 4 provides another great journey from the gorges of the East MacDonnell Ranges back to civilisation and our ultimate finish line at the Alice Springs Brewery.

We start amidst the sheer ridge lines and peaks of the Ross River Gorge and then cruise south on the narrow Binns Track as it criss-crosses the dry Ross River. This section of the course is often sandy and loose but feels like an escape from the ranges as we head into the open plains below. We suggest you keep a high cadence across the sand and keep powering for the other side!

Stage 4's only racing segment can be a Roubaix-esque bone rattler that commences when we turn west onto Ringwood Rd. This long, straight section of road is the quickest way home but may be the roughest of the whole event with enough corrugations and loose rock to keep any rider honest (but we're hoping to get it graded smooth beforehand - no promises though). Time to harness your inner Wout Van Aert and apply the power while threading the fastest line. Respite comes with a return to asphalt at the 64km pt. Lunch is available in the shade at Jesse Gap which is well worth exploring and often has a permanent water hole in the gorge.

With racing done and very much dusted the course follows the sealed Ross River Highway, looping past Emily Gap and along the base of the range back into civilisation. Keep following the course route and roll under the finish arch into the Alice Springs Brewery beer garden to commence your celebrations! What an experience - well done!

EVENT MERCHANDISE

Please collect any pre-ordered merchandise at registration. We'll have a limited amount of additional Gravel Muster merchandise for sale in limited sizes at registration also.



Stubby Holder
\$25



25gm air
cartridge \$5



Cycling Casquette \$30



Trucker Cap \$40



T-shirt
\$45



Hoodie
\$109



First aid kit \$20

Reminder: carrying a first aid kit and a space blanket is mandatory.

Space Blanket \$7





**COURSE MAP
DAY 4**

SHIMANO



EQUIPMENT

Mandatory Items when riding:

- A safety / space blanket and first aid kit (minimum contents: 2 x crepe bandages with minimum 70mm width, 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.
- Red flashy light facing backwards
- 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. See page 11 for details.

Other gear to carry with you on the bike

- Water bidons – we recommend 2x 1lt bidons (or as big as you can fit). Think about having either a hydration backpack if you are a big drinker
- Sunglasses
- Sun protection for the back of your neck – either a mullet or a cycling casquette?! Other sun protection (like arm sleeves...) if you are especially susceptible to the sun
- Maybe a top tube bag or other small handlebar / seat post bag to help carry your on-bike food, bike spares or any excess clothing you take off during the day
- Repair gear: It's important to be self sufficient out on the roads so you can help yourself (or others) in need. We strongly recommend carrying the following gear with you on your bike:
 - At least one spare inner tube
 - A pump and/or at least 2x CO2 canisters
 - Tyre plugs and/or tyre levers and puncture repair kit
 - Multi-tool with chain breaker and split chain links
 - Tyre patches (look for Park Tools sticky ones) in case you do get a hole in the side wall that is too big for the sealant to seal and/or a tyre plugging kit
 - Chain lube (small container)
- If using your phone for mapping then we strongly recommend a Quadlock style handlebar mount for ease of use.
- Power bank can be useful for the long stages, especially if using phone for route navigation

BIKE SET UP SUGGESTIONS

We could write plenty of words about bike set up and what to bring – but let's keep it simple with these recommendations:

- Gravel bikes. This is what gravel bikes are made for (mountain bikes are also ok). But more important is that it is comfortable to ride! 4 solid days on the bike, in harsh conditions is going to knock anyone around – so make sure you love your bike.
- Tyres of minimum 38mm width - the wider the better (up to 50mm would be good). Definitely choose a quality tyre with strong side walls. Set them up as tubeless. We recommend either the Schwalbe G-One Terrabite or G-One Allround
- Gears: standard gearing (like a 2x with 34-11t or 1x with 11-44t) will be fine. There are no major climbs – the only thing you might have to contend with is rough terrain and a head wind...
- Carrying capacity for at least 2 water bottles and whatever extra items you want to carry

Mountain bikes and e-bikes are also welcome... bring what you've got (as long as its comfortable and reliable).

RACE RULES

See the complete list of race rules on the [website here](#).

CUT OFF TIMES

Course closes 30mins after sunset each day – 6:45pm. We will collect / assist riders at this time.

SHIMANO



ALICE SPRINGS Masters Games

10 - 17 October 2026

The *friendly* games



REGISTER TO PARTICIPATE

alicespringsmastersgames.com.au

Muster Masters

PAST CHAMPIONS

OVERALL MALE

Year	O/A place	Name	Race time
2024	1	Karl MICHELIN-BEARD	5:56.25
	2	Mitchell ANDERSON	5:56.52
	3	Mitch LORKIN	5:57.10
2025	1	Sam FOX	5:29.02
	2	Tasman NANKERVIS	5:33.53
	3	Scott GUYTON	6:02.27

PRIME(18-39) MALE

2024	1	Karl MICHELIN-BEARD	5:56.25
2025	1	Sam FOX	5:29.02

VETERAN(40-49) MALE

2024	2	Mitchell ANDERSON	5:56.52
2025	3	Scott GUYTON	6:02.27

VINTAGE(50-59) MALE

2024	7	Jason MORGAN	6:10.57
2025	11	Rupert WALSH	6:36.46

MASTERS(60+) MALE

2024	25	Nigel LETTY	7:36.02
2025	16	Russell MASON	6:41.52

OVERALL FEMALE

Year	O/A place	Name	Race time
2024	1 F	Ella BLOOR	6:19.40
	2 F	Shauna FREY	6:52.21
	3 F	Imogen SMITH	7:11.20
2025	1 F	Jenny PETTENON	6:34.03
	2 F	Sophie BYRNE	6:35.08
	3 F	Sarah PARK	6:40.03

PRIME(18-39) FEMALE

2024	8	Ella BLOOR	6:19.40
2025	10	Sophie BYRNE	6:35.08

VETERAN(40-49) FEMALE

2024	21	Imogen SMITH	7:11.20
2025	52	Emma KEOGH	8:10.55

VINTAGE(50-59) FEMALE

2024	33	Sherry EY	8:07.19
2025	9	Jenny PETTENON	6:34.03

MASTERS(60+) FEMALE

2024	36	Gabrielle HOWARD	8:19.13
2025	45	Kelly NORTON WATTS	7:46.14

NOTE: the 2024 race did not have a prologue but it did have 10km more racing distance (on day 2).
But it is not all about racing - as the photo below shows!





MERCURE

HOTEL

ALICE SPRINGS RESORT

OFFICIAL EVENT ACCOMMODATION PARTNER

EXCLUSIVE COMPETITOR DISCOUNT

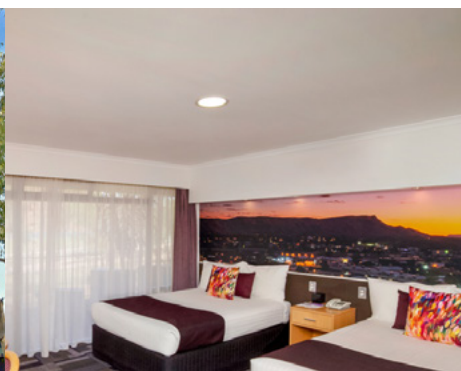
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As event accommodation partner, Mercure Alice Springs is the hosting venue for race registration, competitor briefing and social events.

Nestled on the banks of the famous Todd River only a 5-minute walk from the town center, The Mercure Alice Springs Resort combines friendly and efficient outback service with modern, comfortable facilities in 4.5-star surrounds.



WANT MORE ACTION?

Then check out these other Rapid Ascent races taking place all around the country in 2026 - 2027.

Larapinta Stage Race

Alice Springs, NT. 14 - 17 August, 2026 www.RunLarapinta.com.au

A four day, four stage trail running race along the most spectacular sections of the iconic Larapinta Trail in Central Australia. Race either the Malbunka with 20km - 45km stages or the Namatjira with 10km - 30km stages for an incredible event experience.



Surf Coast Century

Anglesea, VIC. 12 September, 2026. www.SurfcoastCentury.com.au

A spectacular 100km and 50km trail run along Victoria's surf coast and wildflower hinterland with the promise that no two steps will be the same. Do it either as an individual and click over the whole 100km solo or join up with some friends in a relay team of up to 4 and run 25km each.



Run Bibbulmun Track Stage Race

Denmark, WA. 23 - 25 October, 2026 www.runbibbulmun.com.au

A 3 day stage race along the most spectacular sections of the famed Bibbulmun Track in Great Southern WA. For solo runners, with long and short course alternatives this event provides breath-taking running along rugged coastlines, remote beaches, protected bays.



Run Tasmania Stage Race **NEW EVENT - ONLY 10 SPOTS REMAIN !**

Hobart and the Tasman Peninsula, WA. 25 - 28 November, 2026 www.RunTasmania.com.au

A new 4 day stage race through Tasmania's wild heart. Racing through a spectacular mix of coastal, alpine, rainforest and clifftop terrain then returning to the comforts of civilisation each night. Two course options with the Devil running ~22km a day and the Quoll running ~17km a day.



Otway Odyssey and Great Otway Gravel Grind presented by Shimano

Forrest, VIC. 27 - 28 February, 2027 www.OtwayOdyssey.com.au

The Otway Odyssey is the most respected MTB marathon in Australia, comprising 100km, 50km, 30km and 10km courses on some of the best single tracks in Australia. Sunday includes Great Otway Gravel Grind with 106km and 49km gravel grinds on gravel roads through the region's magnificent tall timber forests. Entries open in September.



XTERRA Dunsborough

Dunsborough WA. 28 - 29 March, 2027 www.XTERRAAustralia.com.au

The prestigious Asia Pacific Championships for off-road triathlon and trail running! Racing through stunning scenery around Dunsborough and Meelup in South West WA. With long / short triathlons and 10km, 21km and 38km trail runs, this is off-road racing in adventure paradise.



Margaret River Ultra Marathon

Margaret River WA. 8 - 9 May, 2027 www.MRultramathon.com.au

Providing spectacular 42km and 80km journeys for solo runners and 80km for relay teams (with up to 5 runners), the Margaret River Ultra Marathon provides runners with an incredible race in Western Australia's Cape to Cape coastline. Entries open in October.



The Trail Running Series

Three wilderness locations within 1 hour's drive of Melbourne, www.TrailRunningSeries.com.au

Trail running races for everyone... The Trail Running Series includes 3 different race venues all within one hour's drive of Melbourne with short (~7km) / medium (~16km) / and long (~24km) course runs through spectacular wilderness. Make sure you are part of this revolutionary series in 2025.



Rapid Ascent Journeys

Contact us if you want the bespoke, adventure holiday of your dreams. www.rapidascentjourneys.com.au

A new venture we're conducting alongside our events - Rapid Ascent Journeys offers genuine adventure holidays and guided tours for those who want to use their fitness to explore more. We organise set trips in popular disciplines (like gravel riding and trail running) or we'll organise your own custom trip if you want a real adventure wherever / whatever / whenever you want. These are the ultimate adventure holidays.



Good luck on race day and we hope to see you at another Rapid Ascent event soon.

www.RapidAscent.com.au

