

# Rubber2Road



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# **Motoring Update – October 2025**

It's been a fast-paced few months, and I've thoroughly enjoyed getting out on the road - literally and figuratively - to understand the unique character of our events and the passionate community behind them.

Much of my time so far has been spent conducting driving surveys of the Trek & Drive 4x4 the Doc: scoping routes, meeting with suppliers, and refining logistics to ensure our upcoming events run smoothly and safely. These on-the-ground insights have been invaluable, and I'm grateful to those who've shared their knowledge and experience along the way.

I've also had the pleasure of sitting in on feedback sessions and focus groups, which have helped shape our planning and priorities. Your input is critical, and I'm committed to keeping those conversations going as we evolve and improve our motoring experiences.

Another highlight has been supporting our participants in their fundraising efforts. The creativity and commitment shown by so many of you is inspiring, and I'm keen to explore new ways we can amplify those efforts and celebrate your impact.

As we look ahead to the summer season, I'd love to hear from you - whether it's ideas, feedback, or just a chat about what's working and what could be better. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thanks again for the warm welcome. I'm looking forward to what we'll achieve together.

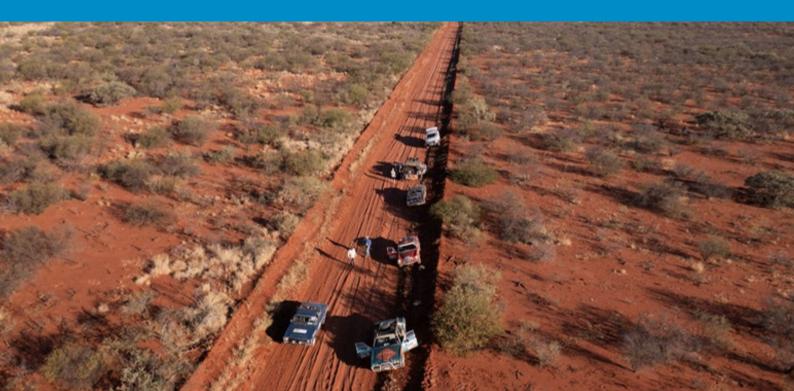
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## Fourth All-Time! Trek Raises \$1.628M

#### **Largest participation since COVID**

This year saw the largest participation since COVID with 255 people across 109 vehicles.

The scale of the event reflects not only the growing enthusiasm of our motoring community but also the incredible work behind the scenes—from route planning and supplier coordination to participant support and fundraising.

It's been a powerful reminder of what we can achieve together.

#### Communications and Media

Media engagement was a strong feature of this year's trek, with every town we visited receiving coverage from local outlets and several following the journey from start to finish.

Trekkers were supported with tips and advice on how to promote themselves to both media and on social platforms, which helped amplify their stories and fundraising efforts.

Many appreciated being contacted by the RFDS ahead of the trek to help shape personal stories that connected their journey to the cause.

Social media activity throughout the event was especially engaging and well-received by both Trekkers and their supporters, helping to build momentum and community spirit across the entire trek.text

#### **In Summary**

In our view, the 2025 Outback Car Trek was an outstanding success. The transition from Bill Patrick to RFDS South Eastern Section ensures continuity and confidence across the board.

Fundraising efforts were exceptional, with this year's total ranking as the fourth highest in Trek history. Comms and media coverage were strong from start to finish, helping to amplify the impact of the event and the stories of our Trekkers.

Importantly, the trek ran smoothly with no major injuries, medical issues, or vehicle breakdowns—a testament to the outstanding work of our volunteer official team. The final breakfast following the closing dinner was well attended, with around 90–100 participants gathering to celebrate the journey. An amazing Trek all round.

#### **Top 4 Highest Donations**

We're proud to share that this year's trek raised an incredible **\$1.628M**, making it the fourth highest total in Trek history.

This achievement is a testament to the creativity and commitment of our Trekkers, who fundraised through events, sponsorships, and the generous support of family and friends.

Notably, we saw a jump in Raisely page setups, from 29 last year to 41 this year, which aided in boosting donations.

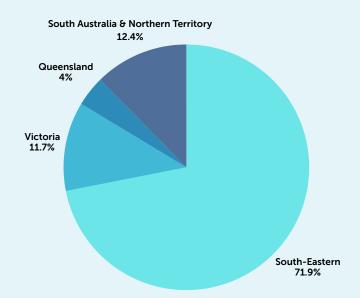
Auctions and team raffles also proved to be effective fundraising avenues, and we're excited to build on these successes in future treks.

#### **Community Benefits**

In addition to raising funds to deliver services, the trekkers also provide a significant economic boost to the communities they pass through, with an average of \$75,000 spent per day over the course of the trek.

This doesn't include fundraising efforts to support local causes, with nearly \$19,000 spent on school raffles during the ten-day event.

#### **Sectional Donation Split**



"We are grateful to every trekker, organiser, volunteer and individual who donated to support the Flying Doctor"

Greg Sam, CEO of RFDS South Eastern Section

# 2025 Outback Car Trek impact by numbers

71

pieces of coverage on mainstream and regional TV, print, online and radio 50,929

views over 17 social posts 109

Trek and Support Vehicles

1,234

RFDS staff views of your stories on our Intranet

255

Participants, Volunteers and Officials

0

Major medical incidents on Trek

53

New Trekkers attended in 2025

202

Veteran Trekkers attended in 2025

10,253

Photos available on the website

To support

\$1.62M+

in donations

# 2025 Outback Car Trek Honourable Mentions

While our all your fundraising efforts are appreciated, we'd also like to recognise some incredible contributions that deserve a special mention. Every dollar raised helps keep the Royal Flying Doctor Service in the air and saving lives.

#### **Auction Success**

We're proud to announce that the 2025 Outback Car Trek Auction raised an incredible \$111,755.00 in support of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. A huge thank you to everyone who donated items, placed bids, and helped make the auction such a success. Your generosity continues to drive real impact across remote and rural Australia.

#### **Rookie Fundraising Car of the Year**

Congratulations to Bazza Barry and Quillon Simpson in Car H71, crowned the Rookie Fundraising Car of the Year for the 2025 Outback Car Trek! With an outstanding fundraising total of \$28,020.00, As a first-time entrant, their commitment and enthusiasm made a lasting impression, setting a high benchmark for future rookies. A huge thank you to the team behind H71 for their incredible effort in supporting the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

#### **Top 5 Fundraising Teams**

We're thrilled to announce the Top 5 Fundraising Teams for this year's Outback Car Trek:

- Team Cobber \$204,396.00
- Tribal Warrior \$202,332.20
- Cockroaches \$116,106.00
- Team Bute Utes \$99,978.00
- Team Big Dog \$76,619.00

A massive thank you to these teams for their extraordinary commitment and generosity. Your efforts make a real difference in the lives of Australians in remote and rural communities.

#### **Top 5 Fundraising Cars**

We're excited to celebrate the Top 5 Fundraising Cars for this year's Outback Car Trek – each one making a remarkable contribution to the Royal Flying Doctor Service:

- Car 888 \$177,232.00
- Car Thirst-Aid \$101,106.00
- Car X150 \$93,296.00
- Car 612 \$54,350.00
- Car 38 \$46,500.00

A heartfelt thank you to these cars for their incredible fundraising efforts. Your support helps keep vital healthcare services accessible across the outback.









# 2026 Outback Car Trek Tasmania Awaits!

Get ready for something truly special - the Outback Car Trek is heading to Tasmania in 2026! For the first time ever, we'll be taking the adventure across the Bass Strait to explore one of Australia's most spectacular and diverse landscapes.

This isn't just a change of scenery - it's a whole new chapter in Trek history.

Whether you're a seasoned Trekker or gearing up for your first drive, this is the year to be part of something unforgettable. The roads will challenge you, the views will inspire you, and the cause - supporting the Royal Flying Doctor Service - will drive us every kilometre of the way.

Start your countdown. Tasmania is calling.

## Charting New Territory – Tasmania Like You've Never Seen It

The 2026 Outback Car Trek is breaking new ground—literally. For the first time in Trek history, we're heading to Tasmania, uncovering a route packed with never-beforevisited towns, winding mountain passes, and breathtaking coastal stretches.

What makes this year truly special is that every town on the route is a Trek first. That's right—each stop will be a brandnew experience for Trekkers and a first-time encounter for the communities we'll be connecting with. It's a rare opportunity to bring the spirit of the Trek to places that have never seen it before.

Expect stunning scenery, fresh challenges, and the kind of adventure that only Tasmania can deliver. From rugged highlands to pristine beaches, this is your chance to explore the Apple Isle in true Trek style—taking the roads less travelled and making history along the way.

#### More Than a Drive – A Journey with Heart

The 2026 Outback Car Trek isn't just about the destination—it's about the full experience, from the moment we set off to the final kilometre. This year's route is one of the most exciting yet, taking us through the Murray Region of NSW and Victoria, along the stunning southern coastline of Victoria, and across the waters to Tasmania for the very first time.

From the initial meet-up to the ferry crossing aboard the Spirit of Tasmania, and through some of the most isolated Tasmanian wilderness every moment of this Trek is designed to be unforgettable.

We'll be visiting the RFDS's smallest section, highlighting the incredible work they do in some of the country's most remote and challenging locations.

Every kilometre we drive helps raise vital funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and every stop adds a new chapter to the story. Expect stunning scenery, fresh challenges, and the kind of adventure that only this unique route can deliver.

## Where are we going?

#### 30 May 2026 Albury, NSW

Kick off the Outback Car Trek in style with Cut-a-Rama, a lively fundraising event hosted by Just Cuts at Brady's Family Hotel. Featuring wild haircuts, big laughs, and a great cause, Cut-a-Rama brings together Trekkers and locals to raise vital funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It's the perfect blend of fun, community spirit, and charity — all before the engines start rolling.

#### 31 May 2026 Moama, NSW

The Trek rolls into Moama for Night 2. Dinner is at the Moama RSL, a long-time supporter of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Outback Car Trek. Expect a warm country welcome, great food, and a night of celebration with fellow Trekkers. It's the perfect spot to recharge, connect, and keep the fundraising spirit alive.

#### 1 June 2026 Ararat, VIC

Night 3 brings the Trek to the historic Ararat Town Hall, where the local community welcomes Trekkers with open arms. It's a night of connection, celebration, and continued support for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. With great food and country hospitality, Ararat delivers a memorable stop on the road to Launceston.

#### 2 June 2026 Apollo Bay, VIC

After winding through Victoria's countryside, Trekkers arrive at the Apollo Bay Hotel for a well-earned night by the sea. With stunning views and a relaxed coastal atmosphere, it's the perfect spot to unwind and keep the momentum going for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Expect a night full of stories, laughter, and community spirit.

#### 3 June 2026 Spirit of Tasmania, Bass Strait

Trekkers trade wheels for waves on Night 5, winding through the lush Otway Ranges before boarding the Spirit of Tasmania for an overnight sail across Bass Strait. It's a unique and unforgettable leg of the journey, blending scenic beauty and anticipation as the Trek heads for Tasmania.







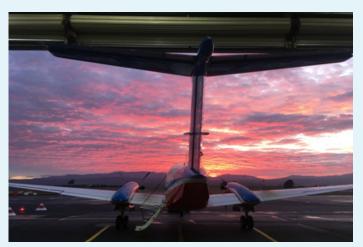


# Where are we going?



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#### 4 June 2026 Hobart, TAS

After crossing Bass Strait, Trekkers arrive in Devonport and begin their journey south through some of Tasmania's most remote and breathtaking wilderness areas. The adventure culminates in Hobart with a night of celebration at the iconic Wrest Point. With stunning waterfront views and warm hospitality, it's a chance to relax, reconnect, and reflect on the journey so far.

#### 5 June 2026 Hobart, TAS

After a big week on the road, Night 7 in Hobart is yours to enjoy. Whether it's dining at a waterfront restaurant, catching up with fellow Trekkers, or simply relaxing, this free choice evening lets you experience Tasmania's capital your way.

#### 6 June 2026 Launceston, TAS

As the Trek nears its final destination, Launceston welcomes Trekkers with classic Tasmanian hospitality. It's a night to celebrate the journey, share stories, and continue raising funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

#### 7 June 2026 Launceston, TAS

The Outback Car Trek wraps up in style with a Gala Dinner in Launceston, marking the end of an incredible adventure. It's a night to celebrate the kilometres travelled, the friendships formed, and the funds raised for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The final night is a fitting tribute to the spirit of the Trek.



# Entries Now Open Updated Forms & Key Info

Planning for the 2026 Outback Car Trek is officially underway, and entry forms have been updated and are now live. Whether you're a returning Trekker or joining us for the first time, now's the time to lock in your spot for this unforgettable journey through Victoria and Tasmania.

The updated forms include important details around logistics and vehicle requirementsso we encourage everyone to review and complete them as soon as possible. Don't miss your chance to be part of Trek history and grab an early bird offer!

#### **Early Bird Offer**

Be among the first to lock in your spot for the 2026 Outback Car Trek and take advantage of our exclusive early bird offer. Limited-time to save and secure your place on this unforgettable Tasmanian adventure!

To qualify your entry forms must be received and all fees must be fully paid. Early Birds end at COB on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025.

#### Early Bird Benefits Include:

- Start Line Position
  - Start Day 1 towards the front of the field.
- "Early Bird Elite" Car Decal
  - A custom decal for your vehicle, marking your team as one of the first to commit—great for visibility and camaraderie.
- "Early Bird Elite" Merchandise Item
  - This will not be available on the Trek for purchase.
- Exclusive Team Feature in the Trek Handbook
  - Your team gets a dedicated spotlight in the printed event guide distributed to all participants.

#### **ENTER NOW! FOLLOW THE LINK BELOW:**

https://www.outbackcartrek.com.au/how-to-enter

## **Updated Entry Forms & Regulations – Please Review**

As we prepare for the 2026 Outback Car Trek, all entry forms and supplementary regulations have been refreshed and are now available online via the news and forms page at www.outbackcartrek.com.au. These updates include important details around vehicle requirements, safety protocols, fundraising expectations, and event logistics.

All participants are asked to review and complete the updated forms as soon as possible to ensure a smooth registration process and full compliance with Trek guidelines. Let's hit the road informed, prepared, and ready for adventure!



# Fuel Your Fundraising with Creativity

Fundraising for the Outback Car Trek isn't just about reaching a target, it's about rallying your community, having fun, and sharing the RFDS mission. Whether you're a seasoned trekker or joining for the first time, there are plenty of creative ways to get started. Tap into corporate support by asking your workplace or industry contacts for donations or sponsorship. Reach out to suppliers and business partners for raffle items or contributions. And don't underestimate the power of a good old-fashioned community event — BBQs or golf days.

#### Go Digital — The Right Way

Online fundraising is easier than ever thanks to the Trek's official platform:

#### https://outbackcartrek.raiselysite.com

We'll help you set up a personalised page with your own photos and story. This ensures your efforts are linked directly to the RFDS campaign and avoids third-party platforms that may charge fees or disconnect from the official fundraising tally.

If you're unsure how to get started, reach out to our community fundraising team through fundraise@rfdsse.org.au — we're here to help!

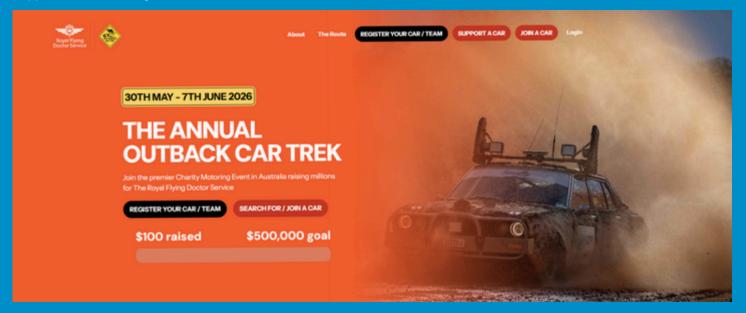
#### **Local Legends: Unlock Community Support**

Your local community can be a powerful ally in your fundraising journey.

Reach out to local councils, Rotary and Lions clubs, RSLs, bowling clubs, and sporting groups — many of these organisations regularly support charitable causes and may be keen to get behind your Trek adventure.

Whether it's a donation, a venue, or volunteers, local support can make a big difference.





## Federal Hotel Group - Official Tasmanian Hotel Partner

We're delighted to welcome Federal Hotel Group as the official accommodation partner for the Tasmanian leg of the 2025 Outback Car Trek. With a proud legacy in Tasmanian hospitality, Federal Hotel Group offers a range of premium venues including MACq 01, The Henry Jones Art Hotel, Wrest Point, and Country Club Tasmania.

Their support ensures our Trekkers enjoy comfort and quality as they journey through the Apple Isle, helping us continue our mission to raise vital funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

#### **Preferred Accommodation - Tasmania**

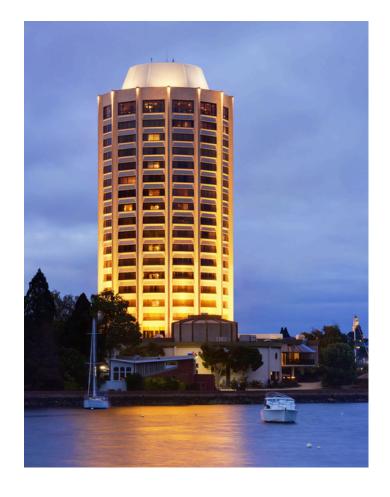
For the Tasmanian leg of the 2025 Outback Car Trek, we're pleased to announce Wrest Point in Hobart and Country Club Tasmania in Launceston as our preferred accommodation venues.

Both properties offer premium comfort, excellent facilities, and a warm welcome to Trekkers.

Special discounted rates are available for participants:

- Wrest Point, Hobart Wrest Point Book Here
- Country Club Tasmania, Launceston there are two options available:
  - Country Club Resort Book Here
  - Country Club Villas Book Here

We encourage all teams to take advantage of these exclusive deals and enjoy a relaxing stay while supporting the Royal Flying Doctor Service.





# Exclusive Trekker Discounts Available Now!

In the lead-up to the 2026 Outback Car Trek, the Royal Flying Doctor Service has been working closely with a range of suppliers to secure exclusive discounts for participants. These include accommodation rates and Spirit of Tasmania bookings to help you prepare for the journey while supporting those who support the Trek.

Several key discount links are now live and ready to use - so we encourage all Trekkers to take advantage of them as soon as possible.

#### **Spirit of Tasmania**

Spirit of Tasmania is proud to promote travel to this event and is offering participants the best available passenger fares. For the best available passenger fares, you must book via this page.

https://www.spiritoftasmania.com.au/offers/the-outback-car-trek-2026/

Once you are on the page please use the Book Now tab at the bottom of the page (not Book now at the top right corner) and you will see availability for the special event fare and access to high vehicle deck space for vehicles over 2.1M.

YOU MUST BOOK YOUR OWN PASSAGE TO AND FROM TAS. ENSURE YOU BOOK THE SAILING ON 3RD JUNE 2026.

You can book your own return passage on a date you wish

#### **Accommodation in Hobart**

As part of the 2026 Outback Car Trek's exciting journey through Tasmania, Hobart will be one of our key overnight stops and we've arranged an additional accommodation option to suit a range of preferences. Booking link are below to secure your stay early

- 1. Wrest Point, Hobart Wrest Point Book Here
- 2. Hotel Grand Chancellor -

https://www.grandchancellorhotels.com/hotel-grand-chancellor-hobart/outback-car-trek-2026



#### **Accommodation in Launceston**

The 2026 Outback Car Trek will conclude in the vibrant city of Launceston, marking a spectacular end to our first-ever Tasmanian adventure. Additional accommodation providers have been secured as per below:

- 1. Country Club Tasmania, Launceston there are two options available :
  - a. Country Club Resort Book Here
  - b. Country Club Villas Book Here
- 2. Best Western Hobart Using BOOKING CODE: OUTBACK2026 go to www.bestwesternhotellaunceston.com.au
- 3. Mecure Launceston www.mercurelaunceston.com.au Contact the
  property directly and mention "Royal Flying Doctors
  Outback Car Trek"
- 4. Peppers Hotel Using BOOKING CODE:
  CARTREK0626 go to Hotels in Launceston TAS
  7250, Australia · ALL Accor Live Limitless



# Explore More After the Trek – Discover Tasmania



The adventure doesn't end when the engines cool down! After the final leg of the Outback Car Trek in Tasmania, we're thrilled to announce a special partnership with Tourism Tasmania to help Trekkers make the most of their time on the island.

Whether you're winding down in Hobart or exploring the wild beauty of the north, Tasmania offers unforgettable experiences - from world-class food and wine to rugged coastlines, alpine landscapes, and rich cultural heritage. Through this partnership, Trekkers will have access to exclusive local recommendations, and curated experiences designed to showcase the very best of Tassie.

We recommend downloading the Discover Tasmania app, the state's official travel planning resource. The app provides maps, accommodation options, attractions, dining, and touring routes across every region of Tasmania. It's an excellent tool for planning both post-event adventures, with the ability to save personalised itineraries and access local tips even while offline.

#### **Launceston and Northern Tasmania**

- Cataract Gorge Reserve a spectacular natural attraction within walking distance of the city centre
- Launceston by Foot guided walking tours showcasing the city's history and architecture
- Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) one of Australia's oldest regional museums
- UNESCO City of Gastronomy discover Launceston's thriving food and beverage scene, from local producers to award-winning restaurants
- Tamar Valley Wine Route explore boutique vineyards and cellar doors only a short drive from the city ( we have physical maps we can provide for visitors as well as a digital copy)
- Reassign Heritage Project an engaging heritage initiative Explore five unique locations in the region, including Brickendon Farm Village, Woolmers Estate, Clarendon Estate, Clarendon Arms Hotel, and Patterdale House
- Meander Valley- Deloraine <u>https://visitnortherntasmania.com.au/visit-deloraine</u>
- Derby Floating Sauna Lake Derby, renowned Mountain bike trails and the iconic Barnbougle Golf course

#### **Northwest**

- Lunch at Ghost Rock Winery (near Devonport)
- Follow the Tasting Trail: tastingtrail.com.au
- Other recommended stops: Turners Beach Berry Patch, Windows on Westella, and Basalt Restaurant at The Cove
- Coastal drive from Ulverstone to Penguin ideal for a short seaside stop
- Overnight in Stanley, a charming historic fishing village

   visit the penguins, climb The Nut, and tour Highfield
   House
- Continue to Cradle Mountain for iconic walks such as the Dove Lake Circuit
- For those travelling to the West Coast, include Zeehan (excellent local museum) and Strahan – home to the Gordon River Cruise and The Ship That Never Was theatre production

#### **Eastcoast**

- Explore Bay of Fires and the pristine beaches
- Visit Devil's Corner winery and cellar door
- Enjoy walks in Freycinet National Park, including Wineglass Bay and The Hazards
- More short walk options: <u>Parks Tasmania 60 Great</u> Short Walks
- Wine trail details: Wine Tasmania East Coast Trail

## 2025 Drive 4x4 the Doctor

#### **Hitting the Road SOON!**

From 11–15 November, the 2025 Drive 4x4 the Doctor will set off from Mallacoota, winding through Corryong and finishing in Tumbarumba. A stunning route that showcases some of Australia's most picturesque and remote landscapes.

This isn't just a drive—it's an unforgettable journey through rugged terrain, rolling hills, and hidden gems that most travellers never get to see. This event is all about taking the roads less travelled, connecting with regional communities, and raising vital funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

#### Let the Adventure Begin!

Only a matter of days until we gather in Mallacoota for registrations and the excitement is already building for what promises to be an unforgettable journey.

Over the event, we'll travel through some of the most spectacular and lesser-known parts of the country, taking in winding mountain roads, wide-open valleys, and charming regional towns as we make our way to Tumbarumba via Corryong.

This event is all about connection—between people, places, and purpose. Whether it's swapping stories over breakfast, tackling the day's drive with your crew, or sharing laughs at dinner, every moment is part of the experience. And with every kilometre, you're helping support the incredible work of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Thank you!

### Let's Make a Lasting Impact – Final Call for Auction Donations

Our auction night is not only a highlight of the event, it's a powerful way to raise additional funds for the RFDS.

We're calling on everyone to dig deep and get creative—if you can donate an item for the auction, now's the time! Whether it's something unique, useful, hilarious, or heartfelt, every contribution helps raise vital funds and adds to the energy of the night. If you've got something to offer (or can convince someone to part with a treasure), please get in touch in the coming days.

Let's make this year's auction the biggest and best yet!





# 2026 Bright Smiles Charity Ride

The Bright Smiles Charity Ride is a motorcycle event supporting regional dental health programs. Riders cruise through scenic routes, raising funds and awareness to bring essential dental care to remote communities.

#### **Revving Up for a Cause**

The roar of engines will echo across the countryside as riders gear up for the Bright Smiles Charity Ride, a motorcycle event dedicated to improving dental health in regional communities.

This ride isn't just about the thrill of the open road—it's about making a real difference where it's needed most.

This ride will bring together motorcycle enthusiasts from all walks of life to raise funds and awareness for mobile dental outreach programs.

With planning underway, riders and supporters are invited to help shape the journey by suggesting scenic and riderfriendly routes.

If you have ideas, please reach out to Matthew Tosolini, Head of Motoring Events—your input could help define the ride's path.

Stay tuned for registration details, fundraising goals, and route announcements.

Whether you're riding or cheering from the sidelines, your support helps bring brighter smiles to communities across Australia.

#### Ready to Ride - Bring a Mate!

The Bright Smiles Charity Ride is more than just a motorcycle event—it's a shared experience that's better with mates. Whether you're a seasoned rider or new to charity rides, bringing a friend along adds to the fun, strengthens the cause, and builds lasting memories.

#### Why Ride Together?

- Shared Experience: Riding with a mate turns the journey into a story you'll both remember. From the open roads to the pit stops, every moment becomes more meaningful when shared.
- Stronger Impact: More riders mean more awareness, more fundraising, and more support for dental outreach in regional communities.
- Support & Safety: Riding in pairs or small groups adds an extra layer of safety and support—especially on longer stretches.

#### Who Should You Invite?

- A fellow motorcycle enthusiast
- Someone passionate about community causes
- A friend who's never done a charity ride but wants to try

#### **How to Get Them Involved:**

- Share the social pages, website or event details
- · Offer to ride together and help with bike prep
- · Encourage them to fundraise or spread the word

The more mates we bring, the more smiles we create. So reach out, rev up, and ride together for a cause that truly matters.





If you have any articles, enquires, feedback or stories to share, please contact us at **motoringevents@rfdsse.org.au**