



*FUNDRAISING PACK*

## THE EVENT

The Simpson Desert Bike Challenge – it's the ultimate adventure race.

On an average day in the Simpson Desert the temperature will rise from below 5 degrees to over 40 degrees Celsius in the shade. High winds and sandstorms travelling at over 50 km/hr add to the experience. Throw in over six hundred sand dunes, camels, dingos, and vast salt pans with no food, water or civilisation in sight and the Simpson Desert is one wild place. Then add forty intrepid cyclists racing for 590 kilometres across the Desert and what you have is the ultimate adventure race in Australia.

For those who crave the challenge of adventure racing, the Simpson Desert Bike Challenge is the ultimate. For the past twenty-one years, riders have lined up on the start line at Purni Bore on the western edge of the Simpson Desert with the goal of reaching the legendary Birdsville Hotel in outback Queensland.

Throughout five days of searing heat, seemingly insurmountable sand dunes and countless pedal strokes, the Simpson Desert Bike Challenge is a huge mental and physical challenge. Very few actually complete 100% of the race, but the lure of adventure and the beauty of the Australian Outback continues to draw athletes from across the country and around the globe each year.

The race has been staged every year since 1987 and usually runs from the end of September into early October. The following document outlines how you can become part of this extraordinary event.



## THE ATHLETES

Racing in the Simpson Desert Bike Challenge is for the young and the old.

Riders can enter either as an "Individual", attempting to complete the entire 590km course or as a "Relay Team", where rides take turns completing each stage.

The youngest competitor to have completed the race was 16. The oldest competitor was 80. The Simpson Desert Bike Challenge attracts athletes from across Australia with a predominant representation from South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.

The average competitors are anywhere from 30 – 50 years old, reside in a city, have a history of involvement in sporting and recreation events. They also have an element of expendable income in order to be able to incur the expenses associated with participation in an event of this nature.

SDBC participants are among the ever growing number of athletes who are seeking participation in non-traditional, experience based sporting activities. They are not "extreme" athletes where the inherent element of risk is primary. They are everyday individuals who have set themselves a challenge and are looking to find something within themselves and an escape from the normality of their everyday lives.

The race pushes many physical and mental boundaries and gives these athletes the fuel and the fire to achieve something that many people would see as being unachievable. These athletes are looking for a sense of satisfaction, the setting of a milestone and a significant achievement in their life.

While the athletes are competing against each other, they are also a source of encouragement and support. During each stage, no outside support is allowed for riders. If a bike breaks down or a rider is feeling tired, the only person they can rely on is themselves or another rider.



## EVENT FORMAT

While the Simpson Desert Bike Challenge is indeed a race, it is probably best described as a test of survival and tenacity. Very few athletes can expect to tame the elements of the Simpson Desert each year and only the mentally fittest and strongest athletes will complete 100% of the race.

The event is conducted over nine stages, comprising five morning stages of approximately 80 kilometres each and four afternoon stages of approximately 50 kilometres each. Morning sessions start at 6.00am and the afternoon sessions depart camp at 2.00pm. An average day at the SDBC can go something like this:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
4.30AM	Riders and Crews are woken by the Race Director (not a popular guy!)
5.30AM	Support crews and official vehicles depart and travel to the stage finish.
5.45AM	Riders weigh in with the Sweep
6.00AM	Morning stage commences
12.20PM	Morning stage cut-off time
1.30PM	Support crews and official vehicles depart and travel to the stage finish.
1.45PM	Riders weigh in with the Sweep
2.00PM	Afternoon Stage Commences
6.00PM	Afternoon stage cut-off time.
7.30PM	Evening briefing and results announced.
9.00PM	Generators and lights switched off.

This program is followed each day, except for the final day of the race where only a morning session is conducted.

The event starts at Purni Bore in South Australia and travels along an eroded track called "The Rig Road". The finish of the event is the legendary Birdsville Hotel in Outback Queensland. Purni Bore is about two days drive from Adelaide and Alice Springs, three days from Sydney and Melbourne and four days from Queensland. Although the distances may look short on the map, the tracks are rough and slow going.



Throughout the race, riders must maintain a minimum speed requirement of 12 km/hr across the sand and desert tracks.

Should riders fail to average this speed, they will be caught by the pursuing Sweep vehicle and transported to the stage finish. Riders are not disqualified from the event if they are caught by the Sweep; however they will incur a time penalty and cannot qualify for 100% completion of the event. Water Stops providing water, shade and medical assistance are located at every 20 kilometre mark along the course in the morning and at 15, 30 and 40 kilometre marks in the afternoon.

During racing stages, all riders must be completely self sufficient. Each rider must have a support crew, who transport all water, food, cycling equipment, camping gear and any other items during the event. On average a competitor will consume approximately 100 litres of water throughout the race.

While the SDBC may seem to be an extreme event to many, it is not classified as an extreme sport. The nature of extreme sport is that the element of risk is the primary factor. While elements of risk are evident in the SDBC, they are not the sole reason for participation. With this in mind, the SDBC has strict policies on fluid consumption, weight loss and food intake. A team of doctors travel with the event for its entirety, with the Royal Flying Doctor Service also available in the case of emergency. Riders failing to meet the strict standards applied by the race management incur time penalties and even disqualification.



## MEDIA

Some Media think that we're a little strange.

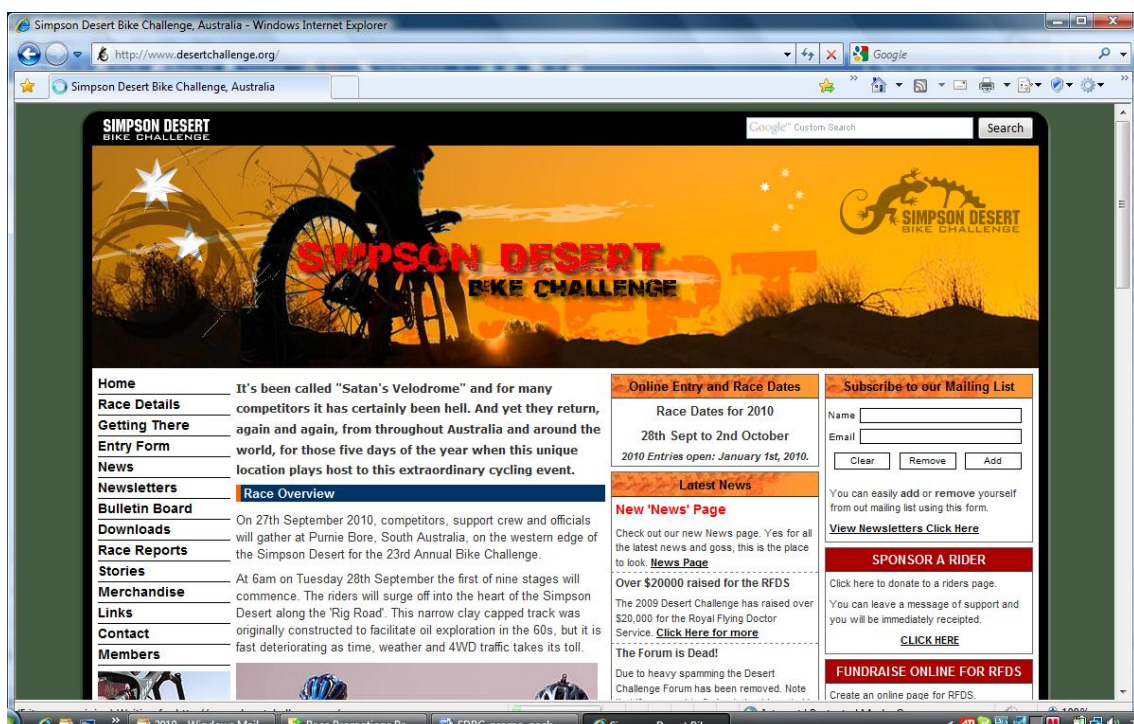
Key media coverage has seen the race featured in articles in Australian Mountain Bike Magazine and Inside Sport, gaining a tremendous response from interested participants and supporters of the event.

Outside of these key media, the race has also had support from R.M. Williams Outback Magazine, the Adelaide Advertiser, regional publications in the Northern Territory and South Australia, and Sydney Metropolitan papers including the Northern District Times and the Southern Courier.

The event is also heavily supported by the cycling, mountain bike, and adventure community across the country. This support comes through industry sites and associations such as [www.cyclingnews.com](http://www.cyclingnews.com), Cycling Australia, [www.ExplorOz.com](http://www.ExplorOz.com) and the South Australian Tourism Commission.

While the location of the race does restrict the amount of media coverage, freelance journalists and photographers have participated in and recorded the event for distribution to national and international media.

The event website ([www.desertchallenge.org](http://www.desertchallenge.org)) is live throughout the year and features a comprehensive analysis of the event in addition to tips for completion of the race. This site is linked to prominent cycling and mountain bike sites throughout Australia and receives solid traffic throughout the year.



The screenshot shows the website <http://www.desertchallenge.org/> in a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The page features a large banner image of a mountain biker on a sunset background with the text "SIMPSON DESERT BIKE CHALLENGE". The website layout includes a navigation menu on the left with links such as Home, Race Details, Getting There, Entry Form, News, Newsletters, Bulletin Board, Downloads, Race Reports, Stories, Merchandise, Links, Contact, and Members. The main content area is divided into three columns: "Online Entry and Race Dates" (Race Dates for 2010: 28th Sept to 2nd October), "Latest News" (New 'News' Page, Over \$20000 raised for the RFDS), and "Subscribe to our Mailing List" (Name, Email fields, Clear, Remove, Add buttons). A "SPONSOR A RIDER" section is also visible, along with a "FUNDRAISE ONLINE FOR RFDS" button. The browser's address bar and taskbar are also visible.

## CHARITY

It wouldn't be as much fun without such a great cause.

With the event being a true blue Australian adventure, it would seem natural that riders in the SDBC also support those in need.

The event was originally created as a fundraiser to assist those with a spinal injury, and donations were made to Paraquad Associations in each State. A change of race management in 1995 led to a long term association with Queensland's Paraplegic Benefit Fund, which remained in place until 2006.

In 2007 the Paraplegic Benefit Fund relinquished control of the event, and it is now organised and operated by a registered not-for-profit association – Desert Challenge Incorporated.

From 2008, The Simpson Desert Bike Challenge will support the Royal Flying Doctor Service.



Established in 1928 and developed on a national basis in the 1930s, the Service soon provided not only emergency medical aid to the people of the Inland, but also a comprehensive health care and community service.

The development of the Inland was in many ways made easier by the presence of the Flying Doctor. Previously, serious illness or accident often meant death and the Inland holds many graves of people who might have lived had they been able to receive medical aid quickly enough.

The late Sir Robert Menzies, Former Prime Minister of Australia 1939-41 & 1949-66, once very aptly said that the Flying Doctor Service represented the "greatest single contribution to the effective settlement of the far distant back country that we have witnessed in our time..."

The RFDS was the first comprehensive aerial medical organisation in the world and to this day remains unique for the range of primary health care and emergency services it provides and for the huge area of sparse population and climatic extremes over which it operates - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Riders take it upon themselves to gain individual sponsorships from families, friends and work colleagues and raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. This is not a compulsory exercise however many athletes and volunteers choose to undertake this activity as it provides another element to the race and an additional level of satisfaction to their participation.



## Fundraising Pack

Version:4  
Revised Feb 2012  
Page 8 of 9

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*The toughest mountain bike race on earth*

### FURTHER INFORMATION

To enter or find out more about this extraordinary event,

check the website [www.desertchallenge.org](http://www.desertchallenge.org)

or email [riders@desertchallenge.org](mailto:riders@desertchallenge.org)

Mark Polley  
SDBC Committee  
[riders@desertchallenge.org](mailto:riders@desertchallenge.org)

(5<sup>th</sup> February 2012)

