

# THE FINAL FLING

## IT'S TIME TO SPLIT



Save the Children  
Australia

### -WRAP UP-

25 years



# Thanks for being part of Australian MTB history

The final Wrap-Up for the Final Fling. And, also the final Wild Horizons event after an incredibly satisfying 20 year journey running such events.

As you can imagine it's been pretty tough putting pen to paper for this one...particularly without repeating what has been shared in various communications over the past several months since deciding the Highland Fling was indeed Flinging one last time.

I'm so glad the decision was made to have that one Final Fling. Not only did we manage to raise significant funds for Save the Children Australia (to the tune of \$60,000), but based on the feedback pre and post event from riders (nearly 1200 entered), community groups, and Dark Siders; we gave everyone who helped make this such a special event, the opportunity to celebrate and say farewell with us.

Personally, I loved seeing the Ferndale Event Centre undertake one last transformation from rural paddock into buzzing event centre. To welcome for one last time familiar faces, listen to the Dawn Piper's traditional bagpipe wake-up call, watch the nervous anticipation on the startline and of course get up to some tomfoolery that has been a mark of our events from the Polaris Challenge, 3 Ring Circus, Mountains To Beach through to the Highland Fling.

I was also happy to see our 20 year record of never starting an event even one minute late stand – something we're pretty proud of given the weather conditions at times

Whilst we might be done with running our own events we'll remain very much involved with the sport we love. This will include continuing to run our cycling tours. And don't forget we also run customised bike, hike and ski tours too – just get in touch.

A huge thank you once again for being a part of the Final Fling.

**Cheers,**

**Huw Kingston  
Event Director**

## ROLL CALL – 13 YEARS, 13 FLINGS

There are some very special people whose names need to shine brightly in the history of the Highland Fling. Those riders and Dark Siders who have ridden or worked on each race from 2005 to 2017. We salute:

### RIDERS

Rob Mackey

Bruce Donaldson

Jonathan Packard

Andrew Beddie

Andy Blair

Trent Moore

Eddie Bosch

Alf Richardson

Jason Moxham

Adam McGrath



### DARK SIDE

Wendy Kingston

Gregg Berry\*

Roger Jones

Anthony Schnabel

Alex McNee\*

The Nissan Patrol

\*Gregg and Alex rode a couple of early Flings before coming over to the Dark Side.....



## Saturday

Saturday was a little different this year. Instead of creating our Event Centre in the heart of Bundanoon, we moved it down to Ferndale, so we could create a great vibe, with everyone in one place. It also made our lives easier too. Having everyone milling around the Event Centre was a great way to be able to catch up before race day.

Saturday wasn't just all about catch-up chats though...

As always on Saturday afternoon, we made sure there was plenty of pre-race action with some of our all-time favourite events – from past and present.

### KIDS SKILLS CLINIC

Our Kid's Skills Clinics are always a sell-out event and 2017 was no different. The Kid's Skills Clinics took groups of next-gen mountain bikers through top tips and tricks to leave them feeling more confident on their bikes.

By the end of each session, kid's were tackling balance beams, weaving through obstacles, and generally looking ready to take on the trails. Which they all did later that afternoon, taking part in the Kid's Fling race.



### KIDS FLING

If you think the start line of an elite race takes the cake for intense focus, sideways glances to size up the competition, and palpable race tension; you've never seen the start line at a Kid's Fling!

Which makes sense, because in previous years, the Kid's Fling has been run on Sunday once riders in the Some, Half, Full and 1000Mile Fling are already out on course. So it was great fun to do this on Saturday so family and friends could watch the action with over 130 kids aged between about 3 and 12 taking part.

As the first competitors of the weekend, our Kid's Flingers showed off their just honed skills over a mountain bike course that heads



out of the event centre, looping into bushland and singletrack, before returning them to the finish, often with a fast and furious sprint to the line.

Awesome work to all the kid's who took part and a big thanks for Focus Bikes for the two kid's bike prizes on the day!

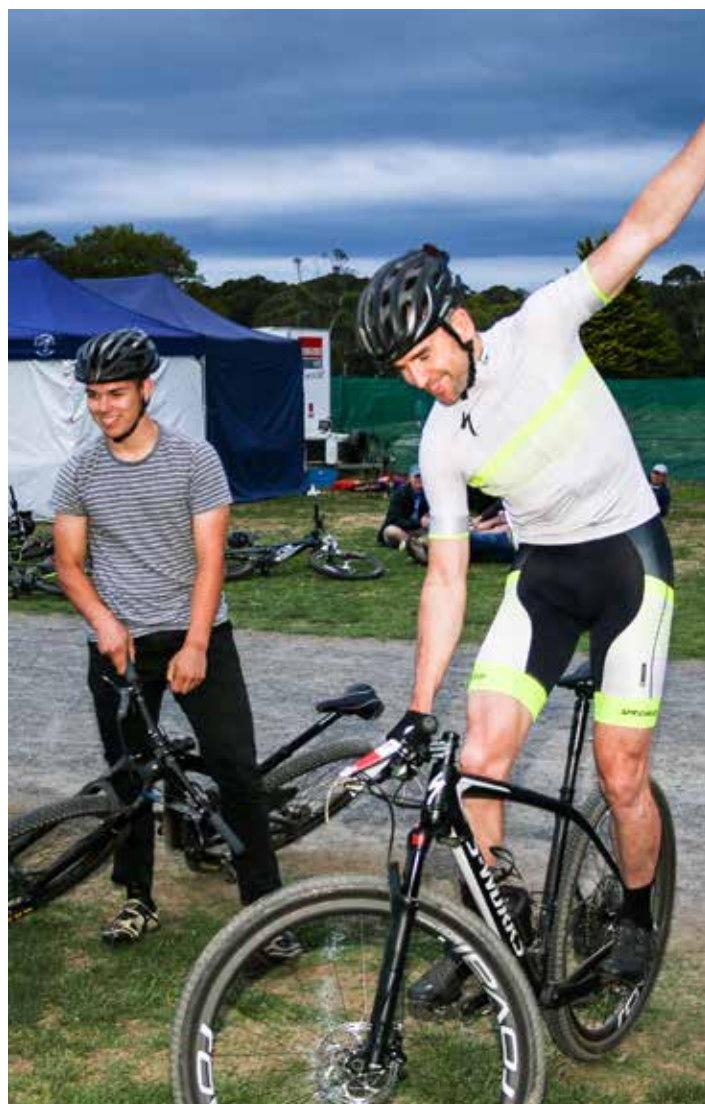
### THE BUNDY CLOCK CHALLENGE

Some may remember the Bundy Clock Challenge which we ran a few times circa. 2011-2012.

Given our location, plus the desire to celebrate things Flings gone-by, it made sense to dust off the Bundy Clock and throwback to this event for the Final Fling. The concept was simple – clock on with a gold coin donation, race as hard and fast as possible over a 1km loop and clock off at the end for your time. With \$200 cash up for grabs for the fastest female and male, we knew it would drive some fast and furious fun.

Over the course of Saturday afternoon it was great to see the Bundy Clock challenge become an all out mate-against-mate competition. Because once said mate beats your time, you've no choice but to head out and give it another crack, right! The only question is does your time get faster, or slower, with each attempt.

In the end, the fastest female of the day was young Maizy Evans, who set a cracking time of 2:26. The men's competition came down to a blistering fast 2:00 tie between Andy Blair and young-gun Harry Watson. The final winner, Andy Blair, decided by a track stand contest.





For the sixth year Bundanoon hosted the Rolloff World Championships.

The Rolloff World Championships have always been a fantastic choice for those riders wishing to partake in the opportunity to take home a World Championship jersey, all without wearing out their legs before Sunday's racing.

Whether it was the excitement of a new course in 2017, or the last hurrah, this year's Rolloff saw a large number of entrants ready to roll. And the competitive spirit was high, based on the exceptional trash talk being dished out before each heat and finals.

Trent Moore - or Trentino Moreno as he is known - took the longest initial roll, securing him an automatic entry to the Grand Final. For everyone else though...it was a tense, systematic elimination process of rolling back down the hill in 2 x 2 heats, quarters, semis.....to the final Final

For the first time in race history a female competitor, Kellie Finlay, almost claimed the rainbow jersey, making it all the way through to the final Final. Trentino however managed to will his bike a little further to be crowned 2017 Rolloff World Champion by less than a metre. Trentino, along with Huw, guides our Biking the Boot MTB tour to Italy. So if you join us see if you can knock off a world champ!

Thanks for everyone who took part, and to the jeering and cheering spectators who lined the course!

Between events and spectating, everyone had the chance to wander around the Event Centre and collect some great gear from our awesome Sponsors - mini pumps, water bottles or CO2 canisters from the guys at Maxxis, a GU Energy Gel from Lloydie and the GU Crew and then the tough decision as to whether to have that free 4 Pines Beer pre-race or wait until post-race.

## Flinging Heart

Many of you got to take part in our Flinging Heart competition too. The winners received a most fantastic gift of a brake from our friends at Shimano. Flinging, hearts and brakes...see what we did there. Clever huh!



The good news is no-one actually broke the heart, it's still perfectly intact, and sitting, rather dusty, in the office as a reminder of fun times had.

It was a great vibe heading into the evening, everyone picnicking on the grass and enjoying dinner from Exeter School P&C as well as a cheeky pre-race beverage from the 4 Pines Bar.



## Sunday

Sunday morning felt pretty relaxed for us this year. Normally we would have packed up Saturday's town Event Centre the night before, and then popped in back up again at Ferndale early Sunday morning; but we were already there!

So a relaxing coffee (in our reusable cup of course) and the chance to enjoy the Dawn Piper's bagpipe welcome/wake-up was the perfect way to start the day.

Once again Penrose School P&C had the brekkie BBQ firing and we're pretty sure those the Piper didn't wake, were stirred by the wafting scent of bacon and egg rolls.

We take this moment to thank you for your help supporting our environmental initiatives for the Fling. We saw a huge amount of people bringing their own coffee cups this year. It's such a small thing that really does have a big impact.

It's estimated over **2 BILLION** takeaway coffee cups are used in Australia every year – and they are not recyclable or compostable due to the plastic lining. If every Flinger who raced in 2017 uses a keep cup once a day for a year, we would potentially save almost half a million takeaway cups from going into landfill!

We'd also like to thank everyone for using the Waste Station.. This year everyone did a great job.

Hopefully some of these little things will become part of your regular race arsenal, and you'll continue to take your own cup and water bottles for filling, plus pack some string for your future race places so you can decline the plastic cable ties.



## NOW WE'RE RACING

As the traditional Dawn Piper's welcome notes faded into the early morning air, the first racers of the day were starting to congregate in the start chute.

The 'FINAL COUNTDOWN' blasted out of the sound system and we got set to sound the start siren for the three distances on offer: Full Fling (112km), Half Fling (55km) and Some Fling (23km) one final time.

We'll admit this part of the day was a bit emotional. Watching everyone stream out for their Final Fling was as thrilling as always, but also a little sad.

We knew everyone would love the course though. The Final Fling was all about keeping it simple. Dai West, our kilted Course Director had no plans to change much from the previous year. Instead of much he went with a lot...

The highlight of the changes was for Full Flingers who got to ride the stunning Wingello singletracks in reverse. The feedback in the lead-up (from a few riders who headed out for a sneaky recce) and following the race was that the change really mixed it up and was great.

We're also glad you enjoyed the on-course entertainment – the choir, the drummers and also the Last Chance Saloon. Many more people stopped by the Saloon this year... we guess it was your last chance.



# JAM<sup>2</sup>

 GERMAN ENGINEERED EXPERIENCE

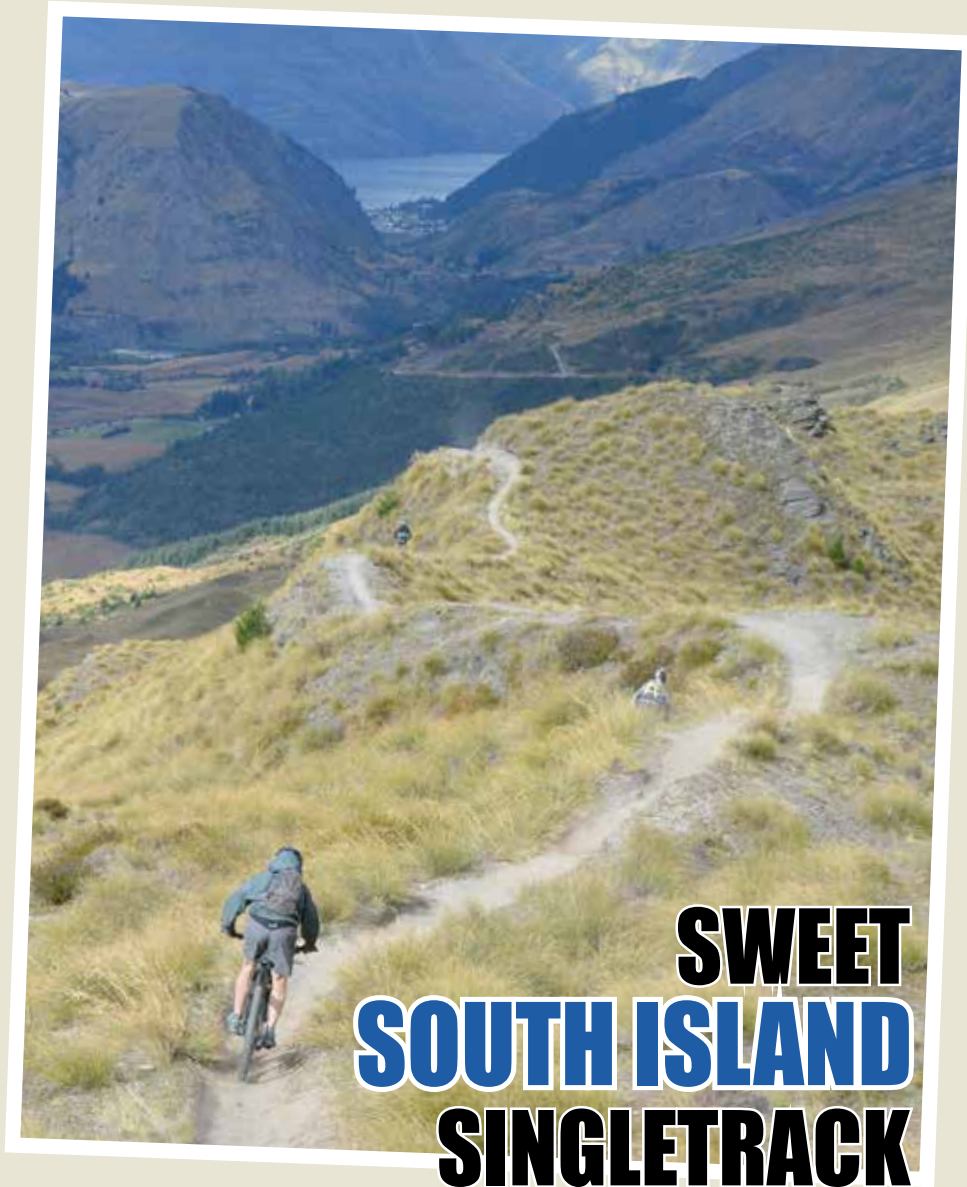


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Sweet South Island Singletrack will take you from Christchurch to Queenstown. We'll warm up in the Port Hills of Christchurch, check out the fun to be had up at Craigieburn, relax a bit at Ohau before cranking it back up a few gears at Wanaka and Cardrona. The ear to ear grins will have to stretch even wider as we go a little bit raw at Alexandra and then plunge into the delights around Queenstown – Coronet Peak, Rude Rock, Skippers and the Skyline Gondola trails.

All week the spectacular Southern Alps will form our backdrop and comfortable twin share accommodation will be there at the end of the day as we rest up and reflect over fine ales, wine and local dining options.

**Full details [www.wildhorizons.com.au](http://www.wildhorizons.com.au)**



## HOW THE RACES PLAYED OUT

### THE SOME FLING

The Some Fling is a fairly recent addition to the Highland Fling line-up. For many years we hosted the Casual Fling, a leisurely untimed event, for anyone just wanting to go for a ride. After some years of watching some young legs come screaming across the finish line, we knew we needed a race that catered to those competitive riders who weren't quite ready for the Half. And so the Some Fling was born.

After it's first year, the Some Fling had quite the reputation – so great in fact we feared a little for the Half (after all when you get all the fun stuff in a shorter distance you have more time to kick back at the end).

This reputation was well deserved. We didn't want the Some Fling to be just a timed Casual Fling, so we packed in everything a rider could want in a great MTB course – singletrack, climbs, fast fire roads and a podium.

In 2017 the Some Fling once again saw a fantastic line-up of junior riders ready to give it their all, along with a host of riders

across other age categories too – 175 in total. We love that the Some Fling has offered riders just starting out the chance to get out there and have a go at a distance and on a course that will challenge them but that is also achievable. As well as offering an option for those returning to racing and those who just like to go faster for a shorter period of time.

Just like last year the front row of the Some Fling startline featured junior riders fully focused, race faces on. As the siren sounded they flew from the line ready to battle it out.

Junior rider Dylan George, who placed second in 2016, claimed the Some Fling with a time of 1:02:53. This was a smoking 12 minutes faster than his 2016 time – not bad for 14. He was ahead of Lucas Bendt (1:07:41) in second, and fellow junior rider Jordan Riddle (1:09:23).

In the women's race, it was racer and Dark Side member Karen Evans who took the instruction to get back fast because she had 'Waste Station duty' seriously with a 1:19:11 win over 13 year old daughter Maizy Evans (1:26:38) in second with another junior Southern Highlands rider Lucy Cavanough Quince (1:37:55) rounding out the podium.

Full race results can be found on our [www.wildhorizons.com.au](http://www.wildhorizons.com.au) website along with links to [photos](#).



## THE HALF FLING

We mentioned that the Some Fling reputation had us fearing for the Half...but we need not have worried at all. The Half Fling once again proved to be the hottest race ticket for the Final Fling with nearly 650 riders entered. Not half of a Full but more than double a Some, this race always sees a fantastic mix of next-gen racers vying for serious race cred as well as racing veterans ready to show the up and comers a thing or two. Plus of course it's a great distance for everyday athletes to challenge endurance, test their skills and still get back to enjoy the afternoon. If we were allowed to ride, this might be our pick too.

For the Final Fling it was great to see plenty of faces of old (note we did not say old faces). This included two times Full Fling Elite winner Craig Gordon and his regular sparring partner Matt Fleming ready to blast around one final time.

Whether he had his sights set on beating some of Australia's best known mountain bikers or it was just a happy coincidence, it was

Luke Brame who took the top step with a time of 2:12:03. He was followed closely by junior rider (and 2016 Half Fling winner) Matthew Dinham (2:12:29) and Craig Gordon (2:13:12) in third, saying "I could see them, but couldn't catch them. I'm pretty sure they were doing it a bit easier than me though." It was a lovely touch that Craig beat his nephew Owen Gordon into fourth place. The changing of the guard indeed.

In the women's race it was a first time Flinger who claimed first place. 19 year old Lucy Mackie finished in a time of 2:44:28 saying she didn't leave anything out there and thought the singletracks were awesome. In second was Allie Blackwell (2:52:35) and then fellow Masters rider Sue Thompson (2:55:48) flying the flag for our Sponsor GU who have been with us for the entire 13 years we've been Flinging!

Full race results can be found on our [www.wildhorizons.com.au](http://www.wildhorizons.com.au) website along with **photos**.



## THE FULL FLING

It was an interesting year for the Full Fling. It started when we announced 2017 would be the Final Fling. The nudging via social media between friends to FINALLY do the Full Fling. Many did – enter that is. Then, as race day drew closer, many remembered their training limitations from the previous number of Flings they had done and decided the Half was still their Fling thing.

318 riders made it to the start line and 264 crossed the finish. We salute all of you for that, particularly our last rider across the line. Oliver Sieur wrecked his derailleur 9km from the finish but ran, coasted and rolled all the way home, so he could finish his first and final Full Fling.

It was great to see Brendan Johnston on the start line to defend his 2016 win and pull off his fourth Highland Fling win overall. Sharing the start line was Andy Blair, not only one of Australia's best elite riders and 2015 winner, but also one of our very elite 13-times Flingers club.

It always surprises us when the siren goes for the Full Fling (it is over 110km after all) how fast everyone flies out of the chute and down through the Event Centre. It is always full gas from the start. Standing by the sideline, it's like a gust of wind.

After riding by himself for about half the race, Brendan Johnston took the Final Fling win with a time of 4:29:50 saying:

"Three of us got established early on and rolled turns until about

Halfway Hill, which is when I broke away and then did the rest of the race by myself, checking behind me all the way. Thanks Huw and all the team. It's been such a tradition here and even though the Fling is finishing it will always remain a very special race."

Andy Blair was second across the line in 4:34:50 saying, with a choking voice: "The course with Wingello in reverse really did feel entirely new. I'm going to need to come back and ride it about 12 times to learn it (nice try Blairy). The Fling has absolutely been a part of Australian MTB history so full of achievements and epic battles. It's going to be missed."

Thanks Andy for your words. We had all done so well with running an event and not thinking beyond that. Right up until that point where you made us all tear up.

In third place, having travelled from Gladstone in northern Qld for the Final Fling, was Michael England (4:44:54).

Meaghan Stanton took the women's race in a time of 6:03:37 after splitting from the group after just a few kilometres and working alone for the rest of the race. We also think she had the Full Fling quote of the day with her "That was so much fun...for the first few hours. Not so much fun by the end."

Brooke Darlington (6:21:46) came in second female, and Bre Vine (6:23:51) rounded out the women's podium in third place.

Full race results can be found on our [www.wildhorizons.com.au](http://www.wildhorizons.com.au) website along with **photos**.



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## **BIKING THE BOOT**

**12 May-1 June 2018**

"The scenery was jaw-dropping, the food fantastic, the organisation impeccable and the accommodation perfect. And to top it off, the group was a really fun bunch to ride with. It truly was the trip of a lifetime." Gregg, Canberra

Ancient culture, an ever shifting political landscape, Latin temperament, fine food and wine, gorgeous countryside, big mountains, great trails...

Now in its 6th year, Biking the Boot is an incredible three-week MTB trip that starts with 10 days crossing the country from near Rome in the west, to Romagna in the north east across the Appennino hill country. We ride through Umbria, Tuscany and finish in the Emilia-Romagna region. Then, after a visit to the fascinating city of Venice, we spend 6 days traversing the magnificent Dolomites from Cortina to finish in the mountain bike town of Riva Del Garda at the head of Italy's largest lake. In total we ride some 800km.

**Full details [www.wildhorizons.com.au](http://www.wildhorizons.com.au)**



## PRESENTATIONS, PRIZES AND A LITTLE BIT MORE.

Congratulations to all our podiums across the Some Fling, Half Fling and Full Fling!

If you were a placegetter but missed the prizegiving please don't hesitate to get in touch with us to arrange the collection of your prize. You can contact [barbara@wildhorizons.com.au](mailto:barbara@wildhorizons.com.au)

We also have a couple of other prizes to announce.



## HIGHEST FUNDRAISER

As part of our Save the Children fundraising push for the Final Fling, everyone was invited to set up a personal fundraising page where family and friends could show their support of your efforts via donation.

Our good friends at World Expeditions once again provided an incredible prize allowing the winner to choose from two China cycling tours. This prize was on offer for our highest fundraiser.

Congratulations Stuart Reid (AKA Kids on Cycles) from Bundanoon who raised \$1860.54 – we can't wait to see your tour shots!



## MR & MRS AVERAGE

As much a part of the Highland Fling as getting wet at some point is our Mr & Mrs Average. This prize is recognition of the everyday athletes/weekend warriors who are the lifeblood of not just the Fling but of mass participation mountain biking events everywhere. These prizes go to the male and female rider in their respective Fling distance who had the closest time to the average for their gender.

### Congratulations:

#### SOME FLING

Kate Coban (2:18:37)

Terry Parker (1:54:11)

#### HALF FLING

Melissa Archey (4:07:47)

Heath Kiely (3:42:42)

#### FULL FLING

Marko Sibila (7:08:55)

Kerrie Hammond (7:34:11)



## THE FUNDRAISING

One of the key reasons the 2017 Final Fling was flung was to raise funds for Save the Children Australia to continue the superb work they do for children and families around the world.

'Save the Children Australia is very excited to be the charity partner of The Highland Fling mountain bike marathon. The funds we receive from the event will support our work in Australia and overseas, giving children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm.

We're delighted to continue our extremely close relationship with Huw Kingston, founder of Wild Horizons – the organisation behind The Highland Fling. Huw is an Ambassador for Save the Children Australia and our largest ever individual fundraiser, so we are very pleased that he has seen fit to add another layer to this relationship.'

From your entry into this year's Final Fling, online donations with your entry through to personal fundraising and bids in our on-the-day auctions to claim a \$4000 FOCUS bike or \$1000 Shingleback Rack, all have helped result in an excess of \$60,000 being raised!

## Thank you!

Thanks also need to go to a host of other people who helped us reach this amount. From our local charity store who donated \$500, to the State Government entity Forestry Corporation of NSW who halved their regular per rider fee, to some suppliers who chose to waive or reduce their fees. . all so we could have a greater amount in the pot for Save the Children Australia.

To everyone who has helped us raise funds – Save the Children cannot begin to thank you enough.



## THE FINAL HEARTFELT THANKS!

I know we say it at every opportunity, but that's because it's true and we're incredibly grateful. Events like the Highland Fling cannot happen without the support of a host of people – including our Sponsors, local landowners, the general community and community groups, our Dark Side team and more. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank each every one of them (for this year and all the others too).

**To our Major Sponsors Ground Effect, Focus Bikes, Maxxis, World Expeditions, GU Energy and 4 Pines Brewery thank you for supporting this event. Your generosity in terms of prizes, special offers, fun additions and time to be part of it all make it what it is.**

Thank you also to our Support Sponsors Rock&Roll Lube and The Fixed Wheel for helping us make it happen.

### Other Sponsors, and prize supporters in 2017 included:

- Shingleback Racks
- Shimano
- Blunt
- Osprey
- Bathefex
- AMB Magazine
- Aquamann Irrigation
- Bundanoon Country Inn
- Bundanoon Hotel
- Ye Olde Bicycle Shoppe
- Bundanoon Pizza & Pasta
- Delilicious Café

We thank the property owners who have allowed us (and you) the use of their beautiful land to enjoy: Greg & Diane Joice, Trevor & Sheryl Liebowitz, Doug Roach, Geoff Blunt, Matt & Donna Hescott, Mark & Ulli Fisher, David & Simone Gabriel, Robert & Barbara Boag, Nigel & Caroline Hartley, Chris Roberts & Tanya Cox, Camilla Learmonth, Michael Glover & Chris Cole and Anthony Parro

We also take this opportunity to remind you to never attempt to ride through these properties at any other time. Thank you.

We thank you for supporting the fundraising of our local community groups. Thanks to the Exeter, Penrose and Wingello School P&Cs for creating amazing pre and post race meals

Thanks to the local Rural Fire Service brigades of the Southern Highlands who had dozens of marshals on course.. The Pony Club sorted you out for camping and The Men's Shed for parking. Some \$25,000 was raised by these groups on the weekend.

Thanks to Lynne Vaughan for running the Kids Skills clinics which raised money for Save the Children. Thanks to Marathon-Photos, Roy Meuronen and Rob Marlow for their amazing shots of everyone across the weekend. Have you picked up some of yourself from Marathon-Photos? If not, you can get them here. Steve Martin from Precision Timing timed with precision as always and Serendipity the Choir were in precise tune too.

All the wonderful people (and let's not forget The Patrol) on the WORLD FAMOUS Dark Side, many of whom have been with Wild Horizons events since the very beginning start. You truly are the most amazing crew! It would be remiss to not name the certain legends who have made the event happen year on year on year. We take our Tam O'Shanter's off to:

Beverley Atkins, Cecilia Barry, Nicky Barry, Danien Beets, Renai Beets, Gregg Berry, Wayne Byard, Christine Cassin, Graeme Dawes, Pat Dellagiacoma, Liam Doherty, Steve Evans, Karen Evans, Barbara Ertz, Erica Galea, Denis Garbutt, Roger Jones, Bill Killick, Wendy Kingston, James Lamb, Art Lidbetter, Rob Marlow, Warren McLaren, Alex McNee, Ross Norris, Mark Raddatz, Simon Rainsford, Ant Schnabel, Matthew Walker, David West and, of course, The Nissan Patrol that has been with us since 1998. Legends all!

And now...



## IT'S TIME TO SPLIT

### Contact

We always love to hear from you. If you'd like to get in touch, find out more about Wild Horizons and our tours, you can:

Email us at [info@wildhorizons.com.au](mailto:info@wildhorizons.com.au)

Visit us at [www.wildhorizons.com.au](http://www.wildhorizons.com.au)

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