42 Riders joined us for the 2015 Ride4MD; as supporters of the Muscular Dystrophy community come together to make a difference, raise awareness and raise funds for those living with MD in Queensland.

On Sunday August 30, 2015 we played our part in a 100km cycling challenge through Cairns and surrounding areas. Riders met at the Sea Eagle BBQ on the Esplanade at 6am for registration before beginning their journey at 7am. On return at noonish, we were provided with light refreshments and a sausage sizzle and some family time in the park.

CHRIS’S STORY
When Chris Wiles’ only son, Harper, was 5 and started school, they noticed some physical challenges he seemed to be having compared to the other kids. They decided a routine visit to the GP would solve the problem and initially it was presumed to be an iron deficiency. However after a series of tests and a muscle biopsy, they received the diagnosis of Becker’s Muscular Dystrophy. He seemed so healthy and had such a promising physique, they were shattered. They started reading everything they could find about MD as did their family.

They discovered Becker’s is not as aggressive as other varieties of the disease, but will
likely still lead to mobility problems and reduced life expectancy. Through their family, they also discovered The Ride 4 MD and Muscular Dystrophy QLD.

Chris was quick to realize he needed to work on his fitness and cycling for a cause close to home provided the incentive he needed. When he learnt of the support MDQ provides to Queenslanders he knew it was a ‘no brainer’.

In 2013 he rode Innisfail to Cairns raising funds. In 2014 a team of 4 riders completed the first official Cairns Ride4MD raising much-needed funds also. In 2015 he wanted to further establish the ride in Cairns to support all Queenslanders living with this debilitating disease. He wanted to ride for all those who can’t in the hope their efforts go some small way to improving our communal quality of life – That’s when he met me and we decided to make this the biggest Ride4MD in Cairns ride yet!

Chris created the Team Ride4MD because he wanted to raise money and make a difference. The more people that knew about this, the greater the impact it would have. It means a great deal to the 500+ families in Queensland living with muscular dystrophy. So we set out to promote and grow the ride for 2015.

Before we knew it, the reach of our social network and friend groups had exploded. From 4 riders in 2014 to having to close off registrations early at 42 was mind blowing. Another 20 riders contacted MDQ after registration closed to join, albeit too late.

As a client of MDQ, I knew first-hand the battle that Chris had with Harper having reduced ability. Diagnosed in early 2013 with SBMA, a rare form of Motor Neurone Disease ended my love of long distance charity cycling. It also robbed me of the strength, both physically and mentally to remain in the workforce and contribute fully to society. With the overwhelming support of my beautiful family and dear friends I committed myself to fight back to regain the former me as best my body will allow. This ride attempt can only be described as a mammoth day out for me.

THE RIDE
Cairns turned on a beautiful morning for riders that had come from as far as Mareeba and Port Douglas. Fully supported with escort vehicles and paramedics, we set off in 3 speed groups, heading North from The Esplanade via Smithfield to Canon Park for the first drink and food break. The amazing volunteers had more food than the Army Corp Caterers and bigger smiles to greet.

The second leg saw us head south-east deep into croc country via the Edmonton boat
ramp, where I’m sure I saw two fine gentlemen in a canoe playing a banjo. Now I don’t know if it was the tail wind or the banjo music, but our speed average suddenly doubled. Heading back through the scenic cane fields dodging cane toads and snakes, we found ourselves heading through the heart of Cairns to the cheers and clapping of locals. We were amazed at the local support. It was then my daughter, Jade, advised me that my ride knicks were inside out. Perhaps that’s what it was, I like to think it was genuine support for us!!!!!!!

Our next refill station was at the Centenary Lakes gardens, a beautiful shaded welcome stop for saddle sore bums and tired legs. I was, however, distracted because at the shelter next to us was an AA meeting. This confused me somewhat because I felt I needed to be in two places at once. Anyway, we set off again with waves and cheers from both shelters as I tried not to be recognized.

North again to Smithfield and back over the dreaded Brinsmead Hills. I still don’t get how they were steeper the second time but Strava never lies, I’m telling the truth. The home stretch saw us headwind along Mulgrave Road before the victory lap of the Esplanade to well-earned rest.

We raised Muscular Dystrophy awareness along the way and an amazing $11,000 in the process. We made new friends and caught up with old friends. We turned bike riders into cyclists and good legs into jelly. We turned a normal day into a great day. You supported your community – Thank you.
I look forward to helping out next year to make the ride bigger and better for both the riders and MDQ.

Muscular Dystrophy Queensland supports people and families living in Queensland with Muscular Dystrophy and other neuromuscular conditions through: client services including information and referral, community and personal networks, advocacy, equipment loans, assistance with costs related to equipment, modifications, mobility and access, no interest loans, respite, both state and national based awareness raising activities, support of Queensland based research and various fundraising programs.