



# Locals head off on MS Ride again

IF you get caught speeding in Bombala, a ticket isn't all you'll get! Senior Constable Rebecca Bavister issues fundraising raffle tickets in and around our area on the job.

She is riding for a reason for the 12th year in the annual MS Horseride Holiday being held in Gobarralong on September 20 to 27, 2008.

Each year this eight-day adventure camping holiday offers participants the unique opportunity to discover different regions of rural New South Wales alongside 250 big hearted horse lovers.

The horse flu shelved the fund raising event last year much to Rebecca's dismay. In the lead up she had raised \$1900! This amazing effort still got donated and in 2008 Rebecca is gearing to do one better with a goal of \$3500.

Senior Constable Bavister has now rounded up a group of girlfriends from the area that will be doing the ride with Rebecca and her horse, Cookies 'n' Cream. "Whilst I have been doing it for years it is Cookie's first, so he is a little bit nervous. He is only a baby," she says.

The girls will all be sporting shirts in and around their area that identify them as being the 'Bombala Babes' and have been racking up the miles in the saddle in preparation for the big event.

"Luckily we have an absolutely beautiful part of the world to ride in; it makes it so much easier to get in the groove when the scenery is so spectacular," Rebecca says.

And the horses enjoy the holiday as much as their human friends, with

Rebecca reporting that her horses have loved every minute of it, and always come home fatter than when they went.

"I think the excitement of it all, and 250 other equine friends to meet gets the horses 'rearing to go' and the promise of a good meal at the end of the day is more than enough incentive."

The social side of things is not restricted to just the horses, with Rebecca listing 'catching up with old MS mates and meeting new ones' as one of the main reasons she keeps coming back for more.

"I've been doing these rides since 1997, missing only the 2000 ride because it fell right in the middle of the Olympics and the Paralympics meaning my policing duties had to come first," she said.

"The atmosphere of the rides is just fantastic with everyone there for the same reasons and all wanting to have a great time raising money for a great cause."

Over the years Rebecca has raised money for Multiple Sclerosis in a number of ways, including Police Charity Ball and a 'Show and Shine' car show in Griffith NSW a few years back.

"It was ironic that I was running a car show which included competitions for the most modified vehicle and the loudest stereo, when you consider I am a highway patrol officer and am usually involved in booking car hoons. But it was a great success, and we raised a heap of money."

But perhaps her greatest success in fundraising has been the humble raffle ticket

"Bombala has a much smaller population than Griffith, so a car show or a police ball might not be the way to go, but the people here are fantastic when it comes to fundraising," she said.

"We are in the middle of the worst drought in a century and these wonderful people still buy raffle tickets by the bucket load."

"But that's not to say I won't be organising something like a charity ball in the future. You never know."

MS Society Events Manager Karl Kinsella says 'The horse ride is a unique event which raises significant funds for people with multiple sclerosis, while also providing a great holiday opportunity for horse-lovers.'

Multiple Sclerosis is the most common disease of the central nervous system and affects over 16,000 Australians. The average diagnosis of MS is 30, and three times more women are affected than men.

The MS Society wants to minimise the impact of multiple sclerosis on all individuals affected by the disease, their families, carers and the community by offering a wide range of assistance, services and equipment.

The MS Society's goal is to assist (or enable) everyone affected by MS to live life to their full potential and secure the care and support they need, until we ultimately find a cure.

This year, Holiday on Horseback travels south to explore the undulating countryside along the Murrumbidgee Gobarralong, 3 1/2 hours southwest of Sydney, and is guaranteed to offer adventure, companionship and priceless memories.



**Local Police Officer, Rebecca Bavister will be enjoying the MS Ride again this year, with a number of 'Bombala Babes' heading to Gobarralong on September 20 for the fun-filled charity event.**