



The of the Riders for Research, Peter Reaburn, Mike Dalton, and Lee-Ann Dalton (no relation to Mike) are aiming to raise \$150,000 for rare ovarian cancer research. Image supplied.

Riding from Parliament House to MCG for rare ovarian cancer research

Abbey Halter ♦ May 1, 2022

It takes eight gruelling days across mountainous terrain to ride a bicycle from Parliament House in Canberra to the Melbourne Cricket Ground. But Peter Reaburn is filled with hope as he clips on his helmet and begins the trek in honour of his wife, Claire, who is fighting a rare form of ovarian cancer.

Claire Reaburn is the oldest person in the world to have been diagnosed with Juvenile Granulosa Cell Tumor (JGCT), a rare ovarian cancer that is typically found in young females. The youngest in Australia to be diagnosed with the unusual cancer was just 11 months old.

"Claire and I had always lived a healthy life – fit, exercised, not overweight, ate healthy, never smoked, not big drinkers. We thought we'd live a long, healthy life," says Peter.

"Then Claire started getting a bloated stomach and some other symptoms that we thought we should check out, and they found a tumor the size of a softball on her left ovary. When they did a partial hysterectomy they found it was JGCT, and our journey began."

Since the JGCT is so extremely rare, there's very little research surrounding the cancer, and Peter decided he was going to do something about it.

"I said 'let's take this head on and beat the bastard'. So, I thought let's see if we can get a ride together and raise some funds and awareness," Peter smiled.

Gathering a group of friends, fellow riders, and contacting the Rare Ovarian Cancer Incorporated (ROC) organisation, the [Ride4Research](#) initiative was up and running... well, up and cycling.

The aim for the ride is to raise \$125,000 for rare ovarian cancer research at the Hudson Institute of Medical Research, but Peter said he'll be disappointed if they don't reach \$150,000.

"Reaching our goal will mean we can make a contribution to the Hudson Institute who are leading the world in researching ovarian cancer. It means a lot to me," he said.

"I want more people to be aware... I wish Claire and I would have known the signs and symptoms. This ride is 100 per cent a team effort and it's going to be a success because of everyone here."

Tash Armour is the founder and CEO of ROC Inc. and she's well versed in the pain such a rare cancer can cause – her daughter was diagnosed at her 16th birthday.

"Mikayla was diagnosed with JGCT in 2016, and it's very difficult to be told your child has cancer but to be told there's no research? I couldn't cope with not having hope for the future," Tasha said.

"She had a massive tumor, it was 20cm by 20cm, and we were initially told it wasn't cancer, which is a very common story. She went into surgery and they broke the tumor which gave her a worse outcome.

"How can you go through each day with no hope? I needed that to go forward. We try not to weigh our lives down with the negative... These days she's a happy 21-year-old."

Tasha began the organisation in 2018 and says she's incredibly pleased to see the awareness and enthusiasm Ride4Research has brought the community.



"It needs awareness because it's not on people's radar. There were a billion things I thought my daughter might have had and ovarian cancer wasn't one of them," says Tasha.



The Reaburn family.



The Mitchell family.

Stephen Mitchell is also a parent of a 21-year-old with the rare ovarian cancer, and has decided to join Peter on the ride in honour of his daughter.

A recent graduate of a Bachelor of Zoology at Western Sydney University, Stephen is proud as punch of his daughter. He says he tries to do all the worrying for her so she can get on with what she wants to do in life.

"Katelyn had a tumor pulled out of her when she was 19, which the doctors initially thought was a cyst, and they blew it up in her abdomen. It turned what would have been a 1-risk cancer into a 3-risk cancer," Stephen said.

"It was shattering. She's just gone through so many issues, and we just want her to live her life... we are just happy for her to be happy. I've got to do this ride as a way of giving back to her so she can live, and the researchers can hopefully find something."

Peter and Stephen are leaving Parliament House on their 900km journey today, Sunday 1 May, and plan to arrive at the MCG on Sunday 8 May, which aptly is World Ovarian Cancer Day.

The group of riders are stopping overnight at Tumut, Tumbarumba, Tallangatta, Wangaratta, Euroa, Yea, and Whittlesea, and Simon Chu, a researcher at the Hudson Institute has decided to join the cause himself.

"This cancer often misses out on funding, so this ride is very important. Our research has made great progress but with more funding we can make even greater progress," said Simon.

"It's been fantastic to link up with everyone on this ride and I feel immensely privileged to be a part of this wonderful occasion... and to get out of the lab as well."

The ride has so far raised \$116,924.18, but much more is needed to help fund research for women like Claire, Mikayla and Katelyn.

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