



NEWSLETTER

Late August 2009

Recently I returned from Perth where I met up with the GABR team at the completion of the third last stage of the ride. This stage took them from Darwin to Perth, the most arduous of the whole ride. It involved some seven weeks - plenty of nights camping out with lack of showering facilities, primitive toilet facilities and long stretches between food and water pickups.

All members of the team arrived safely without any incidents. This all changed within several metres from the Kings Park start when Gonny Rundell fell after her front wheel slipped into a groove between the



concrete slabs of the roadway. The result was a badly buckled, expensive front wheel, and a very embarrassed Gonny, as she lay almost at the feet of the Lord Mayor of Perth, Lisa Scaffadi. A replacement wheel was clipped into place and the ride was on the move again.

What were the memorable times for Stage 7?

Christmas in July, with beer cans, bottle tops and gum leaf decorations, complete with a roadside acquisition of an abandoned Christmas tree - the black and white themed New Years Eve (Midnight was officially changed to 8pm to allow for recovery sleep) - the New Years Day "Awards", all this kept up the spirits of the group to relieve the relentless kilometres that had to be covered day by day. The support team had the task of maintaining concentration and alertness after hours of 25 kph travel. Rotary and Australian Rotary Health can be proud of the group representing them.

Western Australian Rotarians turned on the hospitality and opened their homes when asked help out. Travellers and transport drivers gave them a wave of congratulations and a surprising number of donations (out of a passing vehicle, a hand would come and a \$50 note would be offered), or at a camping site campers both young and old would crowd around the map on the Winnebago expressing amazement at what has been achieved and the fact that the "baby" of the group Ross Andrewartha was 52 years old. Donations big and small were quickly offered.



What lies ahead in Stage 8?

The more populous part of Western Australia – the South West onto Kalgoorlie, then the Nullarbor and the return to camping grounds - hopefully a tail wind and then to South Australia - the run to Adelaide – a green light arranged run to Torrens Parade Ground – a welcome at the Festival Theatre by the Minister for Mental Health and for Tourism Jane Lomax-Smith and then the comfort of home hosting in Adelaide.

The group will grow dramatically from Adelaide and we will see the likes of researchers Professor Michael Sawyer, Professor Tony Jorm and his wife Betty Kitchener.

Many groups have promised to join in along the way. On the last day the riders from Stage 1 and the *Rides to Launch* have promised to make the ride from Geelong to Melbourne, the biggest group to date. We see the Rotary "hierarchy", RI Director John Lawrence and wife Janet, RI Director Elect Stuart Heal and his wife Adrienne have accepted Past RI Treasurer Ian Riseley's challenge to take part, (full medical support will follow closely).

Believe it or not this 7 month extreme challenge will all be over in some 7 weeks. Don't miss the chance to be a part of it as it comes near you and your club.

The list of thankyou's in WA is extremely long but the welcome breakfast given by one of our major sponsors WesTrac at their 47 acre headquarters, organised by the Rotary Club of Swan Districts was spectacular. Westrac are wonderful corporate citizens, determined to help develop the young tradesmen of the future. Last year they took on 120 new apprentices! See photos at end.

McDonalds continue to feed the hungry group at suitably placed restaurants, when you hear that a rider consumes 1,500 calories per day and that is the equivalent of 5-6 Christmas dinners, you begin to realise how important it is to have the right food ready to keep the riders going.

There was a well organised Saturday night function organised by ARH Director Graham Brown and Regional Co-ordinator Phil Cordery. We were honoured to have three District Governors in attendance despite their hectic schedule of club visits. There was also one District Governor Elect and all ARH District Reps. What was remarkable was the appearance of one of the host families from Geraldton and Stuart McDonald from the Rotary Club of Healesville (Victoria). Of course many of the support team come from Healesville.

This great night was preceded by some self inflicted late nights with the remaining members of the support team who did not go off to see family and friends. Remember my internal clock was running two hours ahead of everyone else.

Dick White

Chairman GABR





Since returning I have heard reports of how well the team has been looked after at Fremantle Rockingham, Mandurah etc and right down the coast.

P.S Guess how my trip concluded? A 3 hour delay in my trip from Perth, just what

I needed after 3 days of rushing around doing things like picking up 30 bags, 6 camping chairs and another table from our ever obliging sponsors, Anaconda – running retiring support team members to the airport at 5am. Gee it's good to be a Rotary Volunteer!!! Seriously it's GREAT (but tiring).



A letter to the editor from John Farrugia (rider)

Thus far - From stages 1 through to end of Stage 7 - March 21st to August 13th

I have ridden 12,350km, 5 states, 2 territories, God willing, start to edge to 6th state being South Australia.

I would like to personally thank Australian Rotary Health for sending out registration forms to ride a bicycle in and around one gigantic playground "Australia". Thank you to a very well organised and managed non-government organisation for professionally, handling and logistically putting in place such a wonderful event.

My appreciation to all our sponsors - to all our Rotary clubs we have visited - that fed us, breakfasts, lunches and dinners, Rotarians and non Rotarians that welcomed us to their homes allowed us to shower, washed our clothes, gave us a bed and entertainment, they also gave us food for the roads ahead and generous donations.

Rotarians pat yourself on the back for showing me, a non-Rotarian, the fellowship and goodwill, what you have displayed is next to none. I am looking forward with enthusiasm to cross that long paddock, across the Nullarbor. The courtesy shown by road transport users, road trains B double cars and caravans is truly appreciated.

The highlights for me have been:-

1. Being with the twelve exchange students on stage 1 to Hobart - all wonderful men and women
2. Visiting the Wyong Sheltered workshop were 70 people with a disabilities are employed
3. The magnificent \$1,200,000 Newcastle Knights Rugby League gym
4. Visiting a RYLA camp and seeing young men and women being trained in leadership.





TOYOTA



FISHERMAN'S FRIEND



5. The Shelter Boxes that Rotary has so successfully put in disaster areas.
6. The Wilson Park Public School which caters for children with special needs in Grafton.
7. Spending time with the lovely children of Yerecoin and Calingri schools around Wongan Hills and having a lovely morning tea and lunch with them
8. Viewing the Geraldton H.M.A.S Sydney Memorial – a fine project of Rotary.

This is you Rotarians - Rotary at work.

Congratulations to our sponsor Winnebago



WINNEBAGO WINS INDUSTRY AWARD

Best Manufacturer - Motorhomes and Campervans - Second year in a row

Winnebago Industries was announced as the winner of the 2009 Caravan and Camping Industry Association NSW for Best Manufacturer - Motorhomes and Campervans at a gala awards dinner held recently at Cypress Lakes Resort in the Hunter Valley.

Two NSW Winnebago dealers, Australian Motorhomes (Bennetts Green near Newcastle) and Sydney RV Centre (Narrabeen) were also recognised for environmental excellence.



Some of the riders with Ride Director Geoff Kennedy at Boyup Brook

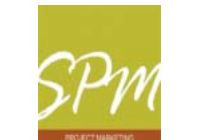




TOYOTA



WesTrac CAT Swan Districts Breakfast



1. Meeting of the Rotary Club of Swan Districts in the WesTrac Canteen
2. David Brown auctioning ride tops at the breakfast
3. Gonny Rundell and Karen Brown
4. Two successful bidders
5. Tony Caruana tells his story
6. ARH Regional Co-ordinator Phil Cordery showing the girls his recipe for health
7. Roberta Gordon shows off her slim figure