



Cyclists on a great ride to highlight mental issues

TWELVE cyclists and eight support crew swept through town recently as part of the Great Australian Bike Ride, a 17,800km journey across the country.

Australian Rotary Health organised the ride to raise awareness of mental health and gain financial support for research into the illness.

Localising the campaign, the organisation called on its rotary clubs to provide accommodation through its members, and Port Hedland Rotary Club president Howard Clancy said his members had been only too happy to do so.

As part of the cyclists' one-night stopover in Hedland, the Port

Hedland Rotary Club treated them to dinner at the Walkabout Hotel and presented them with \$500 to put towards their plight.

Bike rider Roberta Gordon, 62, said she wanted to take part in the expedition as she understood the misconceptions surrounding mental illness.

"I became extremely sick at a time when I had very young children - I had a mental breakdown and was diagnosed with depression so I know how debilitating mental illness can be and I want to help get rid of the stigma attached to it," she said.

A triathlete for 20 years, Ms Gordon is one of four riders com-

pleting the entire leg of the journey, accompanied by three others of a similar age.

The awesome foursome has led very different lives including that of a housewife, outback adventurer, and one with no former bike riding background.

Ms Gordon said she loved cycling through the Pilbara because of the vastness and raw beauty, and wanted to thank the 35 sponsors who had supported the campaign.

The group left Hedland for Karratha last Friday morning following a flag-off from Mayor Stan Martin at Marapikurrinya Park.

They are due to arrive in Perth on August 18 and will complete their journey in Melbourne on October 10.



Cyclists and support crew members of the Great Australian Bike Ride pay Port Hedland a brief visit in their cross-country crusade.