



Pedalling round the nation in cause of mental health

By **JESSICA KELLETT**
jessica.kellett@northernstar.com.au

THE Great Australian Bike Ride made its way through Lismore on Sunday on its long journey around the country.

The ride, which supports mental illness research, arrived in Lismore after a 133km journey from Grafton, and cyclists calculated that they have clocked up over 3000km of the 18,000km odyssey.

Riding the Sydney to Brisbane stage, Bob Missingham, of Murwillumbah, said his section was less of an endurance ride than the countrywide ride taken on by other cy-

clists in the group.

"This stage is 1500km, which is about 80km a day on average," he said.

Mr Missingham, whose great uncle gave his name to Ballina's Missingham Bridge, said training leading up to the ride continued on from his preparation for the Kokoda Track walk last year.

The ride sounds gruelling enough, but Mr Missingham said fellow cyclist Geoffrey Hawkins proved it's also dangerous.

"Geoffrey's bike slipped on a wet railway crossing in Hobart and he's now recovering from a fractured

hip," Mr Missingham said.

After starting the ride on April 19, riders will complete stage four of the nine stages when they reach Brisbane on Thursday.

Those riding the entire route of the ride – through Townsville, Darwin, Perth, and Adelaide – will be welcomed back to Melbourne by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch on October 10 for World Mental Health Day.

"It's a great cause and we hope to bring awareness about mental illness into the community while raising money for mental illness research," Mr Missingham said.