



# Saddled up for a good cause

A CYCLING event to raise funds and awareness of mental illness have arrived in Geraldton.

Participants in The Great Australian Bike Ride arrived in Geraldton yesterday as part of an anti-clockwise journey around the country that began in Melbourne in March and will finish there in October.

Member for Geraldton Ian Blayney and a small crowd of locals welcomed the 10 riders taking part in stage seven of the nine-stage event.

Ride participant Tom Brown, one of four cyclists registered for the full 17,800km trip, said he had cycled 11,700km since leaving Melbourne on March 21.

Mr Brown said he had cycled

from Ayr to Mt Isa — more than 900km — with a chipped femur during the Queensland stage of the ride.

"In the earlier stages, we had quite a few novice riders that didn't really understand the idea of riding in a pack," he said.

"A guy in front of me suddenly moved out of the way without indicating there was an

obstruction ahead — and there was a big hole there. Next thing I knew, I was trying to ride the bike horizontally.

"I went to hospital when I got to Mt Isa and they found I had chipped my femur. I've still got a lump there after two-and-a-half months."

Fellow ride participant Ross Andrewartha said the hardest part of the journey was trying to

take in enough food and water.

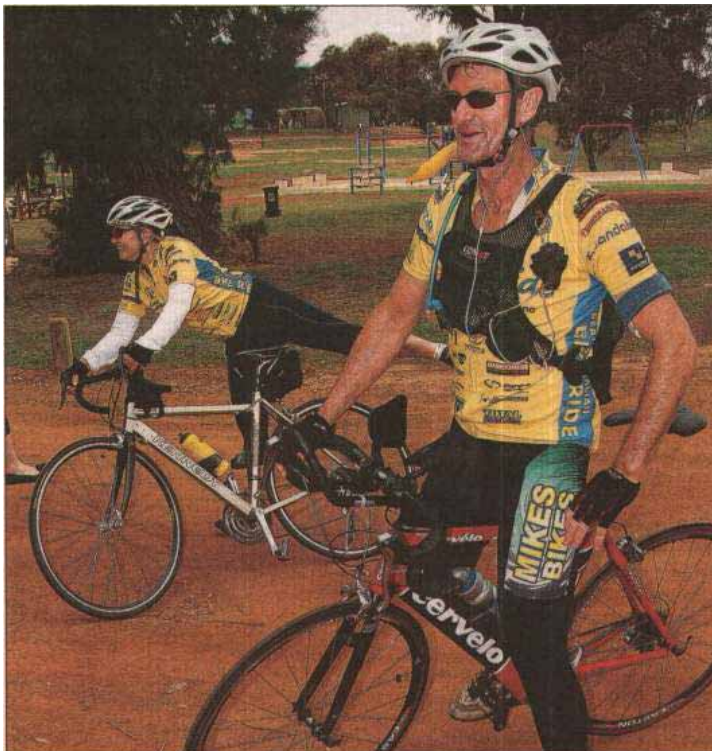
"We're burning up between 4000 and 6000 calories a day, which is about the equivalent of between three and five Christmas dinners," he said.

"It might sound easy, but it's hard to get yourself to eat that much food every day."

The event is an initiative of Australian Rotary Health, Australia's largest provider of funds for mental health research outside of the Federal Government.

Riders will be billeted by the Geraldton Rotary Club for two nights, with a barbecue dinner to be hosted in their honour on Friday night, before resuming their journey south on Saturday.

— Rob Turner



**Puff, puff:** The Great Australian Bike Ride participants Gonny Rundell and Ross Andrewartha arrive at Spalding Park yesterday. Pictures: ROBERT TURNER