



DAILY DIARY FROM RIDE DIRECTOR GEOFF KENNEDY

Stage 4

April 19 - Day 30. Parramatta to Berowra 40km

A chance farewell with the NSW Premier Nathan Rees at Parramatta Park. Lunch with Castle Hill Rotary and rain. Met up with Donnie MacLurcan the initial event manager responsible for most of the route planning for the Ride. Home hosting by the Berowra Rotary Club.

April 20 - Day 31 Berowra via Woy Woy, Gosford to Wyong 108km

Through the undulations of Brisbane Water National Park and then to the coast...much traffic to deal with before a great meeting with Wyong Rotary at the Racecourse.

April 21 - day 32 Wyong to Newcastle 72km

Back to good weather and on to Morisset and an early afternoon finish at Foreshore Park in Newcastle. A visit to the Balance Centre gym (only 4 braved the hot and cold recovery pool treatment...32 degrees to 6 degrees is too much to bear) Dinner with Newcastle Enterprise Rotary and some superb home hosting.

April 22 - Day 33 Newcastle to Bulahdelah 102km

Heavy rain, wiper problems, morning tea at Williamtown Hall with 4 local Rotary clubs and Air Force F 18's roaring overhead. Via Bucketts Way to Booral and Bulahdelah. Terrible road, shocking rain and all the vehicles bunch up together and severely upset the local traffic police.

April 23 - Day 34. Bulahdelah to Taree 100km

Along the Lakes Way past Smiths Lakes to Tuncurry and Great Lakes Rotary. Much improved weather for riding which is the only bit of good news. A combined meeting with clubs from Taree area at the rowing club.

April 24 - Day 35 Taree to Port Macquarie 90km

Vast road works, a visit to North Brother Lookout and the Laurietown Rotary Club. Lunch at RYLA at Bonny Hills. Amazing meals hosted by the clubs in Port Macquarie.

April 25 - Day 36. A rest day and Anzac Day at Port Macquarie

Remembrance is more personal and immediate for me. The death of the daughter of an Alexandra Rotarian on the Kokoda Track, the sad sad loss of Helen Loosley a support driver for District 9810 rides to Conference for the past 15 years and my team driver in Tasmania on Stage 1. Also some worrying reports on Geoffrey Hawkins. If bad news comes in threes then this must be it... no more needed.

April 26 - Day 37 Port Macquarie and Wauchope to South West Rocks 112km

Great meeting with Wauchope, Kempsey and South West Rocks Rotary clubs. Beautiful weather and great coastal scenery.

April 27 - Day 38 South West Rocks to Macksville 72km

More amazing scenery through Grassy Head and Scotts Head. A rewarding meeting with Macksville Rotary and more great home hosting. This is really lush country.

April 28 - Day 39 Macksville to Urunga and Coffs harbour 73km

The back road to Bowraville, it might be snowing in Victoria but beautiful here...sadly there are mozzies and sand flies along the Bellinger River. Prime TV News filming on the Highway and a great lunch with Bellingen Rotary. An evening with Coffs Harbour South Rotary.

April 29 - Day 40 Coffs Harbour to Grafton 90km

Along the Orana Way and through Glenreagh. Visited the school as the Politicians riding south forgot to keep their commitment to the school. The kids must be confused, did they have politicians or Rotarians. Perfect weather for riding on some steep but mostly undulating terrain. Dinner with Grafton Rotary.

April 30 - Day 41 A ride out from Grafton to Minnie Waters 104km

Some interesting sights on the beach attracted the attention of the gentlemen. Staying in Grafton at the Hockey Centre with games happening all the time.

May 1 - Day 42. A rest day in Grafton

May 2 - Day 43. Grafton to Grafton 104km through Lawrence and a car ferry to Woodford Island lunch at Brushgrove return by car ferry to Grafton. We had an evening guest speaker Donna Edye who kayaked from Cooktown to Wollongong in 2002 for Mental Health Awareness on a very personal level. We felt quite in awe of her feat and endurance but her response was she was impressed of our path of riding around Australia. We now have a changed attitude to the GABR, we are not "just" riding around Australia we are actually doing something quite amazing. An interesting discussion on life after the GABR we may have some major adjustments to make just returning to a normal life after a seven month.

May 3 - Day 44 Grafton to Lismore 133 kms but 103 kms before lunch really makes you earn your lunch. For a while we shared the road with Phillip a German backpacker from Stuttgart. A bit up and down but great bike riding country.

May 4 - Day 45 Lismore to Mullumbimby Apart from McDonald's the day commenced with a visit to Wilson Park Public School in Lismore, a main stream school for children with intellectual disabilities a great bike ride connection as the school has a sealed bike track for exercise and muscle development for the students. Something our sponsor Trek should be involved in, as they desperately need extra bikes. The school is a project for the past 20 years of Lismore West Rotary. Heavy rain from Byron Bay prevented any further riding.

May 5 - Day 46 Mullumbimby to Nerang 108 km

Along Tween Valley way through Mooball and stokers siding to Murwillumbah. Wonderful riding the back roads through lush tropical country and passed Mt Warning. Lunch with the three Murwillumbah clubs then the climb to the Qld border over Numinmbuh Gap on Mt Warning – horrendously steep. Into Natural Bridge National Park and onto towards the Gold Coast and Nerang for overnight.

May 6 - Day 47 Nerang to Jimboomba 72km

A late start from Nerang with a transport connection to Canungra. Cool riding conditions through Wangrepong for lunch with Beaudesert rotary club. Then heavy rain but a mild afternoon for the ride to Jimboomba and dinner at Bonnington house with Beaudesert and Jimboomba Rotary. Afternoon tea with flagstone state community college hospitality class.

May 7 - Day 48 Jimboomba to Brisbane 53km

Beware of roads with names like "Bahrscrub" because they don't exist. A lot of back tracking leads us back on course and we finish at Cleveland Point.

End of Stage 4