



Mayor farewells 'hardy' members of Great Aussie Bike Ride

IF YOU spotted Ron Yuryevich at McDonald's yesterday morning, he wasn't settling down to a mid-morning mayoral McMuffin, he was flagging off the Great Australian Bike Ride.

The ride is a 17,800km cycling event which perambulates Australia for mental health research.

Mayor Yuryevich was there to farewell the riders from Kalgoorlie on their way to Norseman.

And he said he thoroughly enjoyed saying bon voyage to the cold, but keen group of 18 enthusiasts.

"I waved them off and congratulated them on their efforts to raise money for such important research," he said.

The ride, which began in Melbourne in March, has had more than 100 cyclists enter one or more stages of the nine-stage marathon.

And while most riders are cycling a stage or two, three are riding the entire way – Roberta Gordon (62), Gonny

Rundell (58) and John Farrugia (61) have notched up an average of 130km a day so far – which will take them in a full circle back to Melbourne next month.

Mayor Yuryevich called the inspiring biking gang "hardy" after hearing one 81-year-old gent from Tasmania wanted to rejoin the ride after breaking his hip on an earlier leg.

Ride director Geoff Kennedy said Australian Rotary Health organised the event to raise community awareness and support for its mental health research programs, which are trying to dispel the stigma associated with mental illness.

Mr Kennedy said one in five Australians will have a mental illness at some stage of their life and the World Health Organisation has estimated that by 2020 depression will be one of the world's greatest health problems.

ADAM KOLBERG



See you later: Back, Roberta Gordon, Tom Brown, Karen Brown, Chris Arnold, John Farrugia, John Rundell, Ross Andrewartha, Rae Walker. Front, Esther Roadknight, Geoff Kennedy, Gonny Rundell, Mayor Ron Yuryevich and McDonalds Kalgoorlie store manager Narry Kumar came together briefly as the Great Australian Bike Ride passed through the gold city yesterday. Photo: KELLIE LEWIS