



Great Aussie bike ride reaches the Burdekin

A GROUP of cyclists undertaking an ambitious seven-month ride around Australia to raise awareness of mental illness will arrive in Ayr on Thursday.

The 16 riders and 14 support crew will travel from Bowen to Ayr on what will be day 62 of their nine-stage epic as part of the Great Australian Bike Ride.

The riders started their journey in Melbourne on March 21 and plan to arrive back in the city for World Mental Health Day on October 10.

Burdekin mayor Lyn McLaughlin said the cyclists were doing the Brisbane to Townsville leg, which represents

stage five of the Great Australian Bike Ride.

The cyclists and their supporters will be hosted by members of the Ayr Rotary Club on Thursday night as guests at the club's weekly meeting, during which they will make a power point presentation on their journey.

The club also plans to make a presentation to the riders of promotional packs from the Burdekin Mental Health Foundation as well as a financial donation to Australian Rotary Health and its mental health programs.

The mayor will be at McDonald's at 7am on Friday to

wave the riders off when they depart Ayr for Townsville.

"This is a really good cause," Cr McLaughlin said.

"Mental illness affects one in five people and many of us know someone who suffers from some type of mental illness."

She has encouraged members of the community to be at McDonald's on Friday morning to flag the riders off and show their support for the cause.

As well as increasing awareness of mental illness, the ride is raising financial support for research into mental illness under the auspices of Australian Rotary Health.