



Rotarian pedals for mental health

REPRESENTING Glen Innes Rotary, Elton Squires recently participated in the Grafton section of the Great Australian Bike Ride. It is a nine-stage 17800km ride around Australia raising funds and creating awareness of research into mental illness, being supported by Australian Rotary Health.

The ambitious cycle ride began in Melbourne on March 21 and will finish back there on October 10. A handful of riders are completing the full ride, with many joining in for local sections.

Mr Squires, a former District 9640 Chairman of Australian Rotary Health, took up cycling in his sixties and joined 11 other riders for the 100km ride from Grafton to Minnie Water and return. It was held on April 30

after which other riders continued on to Brisbane.

Earlier in the year, the Glen Innes community enthusiastically supported Rotary's fundraiser at the Chapel Theatre for two full house showings of a locally produced version of *The Full Monty*. The very generous support of the Glen Innes Arts Council and its members enabled funds raised to be shared equally between mental health research and a dental services project in Laos led by Dr Ed Montgomery. The dental project was co-ordinated and supported by Rotary Australia World Community Services.

Statistics indicate that one in every five Australians will suffer some degree of mental health during their lifetime. Australian

Rotary Health supports research projects conducted right across Australia in every major teaching and medical research institution. Last year, \$3.5 million was committed across 98 research projects.

Examples include positive parenting programs, Vietnam veterans post traumatic disorders, and teenage eating disorders. Additionally, 27 rural medical scholarships were awarded last year to encourage young doctors to practice in rural areas.

The Great Australian Bike Ride represents an opportunity to unite thousands of Australians behind the mental health cause and to make a difference to the lives of many.

SUBMITTED



Committed... Elton Squires (at rear) with Gony Rundell (Melbourne), Sue Webber (Grafton) and Roberta Gordon (Noosa), four of the dozen riders at the finish of 100km Minnie Water to Grafton cycle ride to raise money for mental illness through Australian Rotary Health.