



# Paul's great Aussie bicycle adventure raises big bucks

□ **Katrina Scott**

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**During his 1286km push-bike ride across two States Rotary Club of Kingaroy member Paul Overton stayed on a house boat, in a convent and survived two-degree temperatures.**

He did this to raise awareness for mental health as part of Rotary's inaugural Great Australian Bike Ride.

The ride itself involved nine legs travelling around Australia and started and finished in Melbourne.

It started on March 21 with riders arriving back in the Victorian capital on October 10.

"On my leg we rode out of Adelaide to the Barossa Valley fundraising as we went," Paul said.

"We raffled off our ride shirts and people just embraced the ride."

Mr Overton described the 143km trek from Renmark to Mildura as the hardest.

"It was straight and desolate," he said.

"Mallee and salt bush was all we saw and then dust."

Throughout the Great Australian Bike Ride there was a wedding, Christmas in July and a funeral.

The funeral took place on the way to Melbourne to signify the end of the ride.

It was complete with a eulogy, violin players and a coffin.

Cyclists wore black arm bands as they travelled from Swan Hill to Boort.

Mr Overton said the funniest part of his trip was an overnight visit to a convent in St Arnaud's, Victoria.

"Before we went to bed we received a blessing from the priest," he said.

"He announced grand silence and there was no snoring that night.

"We all slept so well."

Mr Overton experienced the coldest part of his trip in Ballart which was two degrees upon arrival.

From there the group travelled downhill to Geelong and then onto Melbourne where they were escorted by police into the city's centre for a civic reception.

"The best part of the ride was the great fellowship of Rotary and meeting people from all walks of life who shared a common goal," Mr Overton said.

The Great Australian Bike Ride raised between \$400,000 and \$500,000 for mental health research through Rotary Health.



*Rotary Club of Kingaroy member Paul Overton rode 1286 kilometres from Adelaide to Melbourne as part of the Great Australian Bike Ride last month.*



*LEFT: On the open road: Paul Overton rode along Torrens Parade in Adelaide on the way to Melbourne.*