



Taree stopover

THE Great Australian Bike Ride has cyclists pedalling their calf muscles all the way from Melbourne to Taree.

Stopping overnight next Thursday, the cyclists will pick up other keen riders ready to take part in the challenging 17,813km journey.

One keen participant is Roberta Gordon, a 60-year-old retired teacher/librarian and experienced ex-triathlete, cycling her way around Australia to raise about \$40,000 for mental health.

The seven-month bike ride is a major cycling event touring around Australia to raise money and awareness for mental illness.

Organised by Australian Rotary Health the ride aims to raise funds for research into various aspects of mental illness. The ride officially started in Melbourne on March 21 and has circled Tasmania and is now said to be somewhere between Melbourne and Sydney.

Rotary Club of Taree director community service Graeme Sparkes-Carroll said the seven month ride is not a race.

"The composition of the riders will change during the

event, however a couple of riders are completing the full course," he said.

"Research into Australians' mental health issues will be the winner and the outcome will be greater understanding and more appropriate treatment for patients."

Mr Sparkes-Carroll said the riders (and support staff) will be stopping at every major Australian city.

"They will be staying overnight in Taree, Thursday and the Rotary clubs in the valley are hosting them at a dinner that night."

The riders are due to cycle through Forster about lunch time, stopping at John Wright Park for lunch and will finish the day at the rowing club in Endeavour Place, Taree around 5pm. They will depart the next day from McDonalds (Chatham) at 8 o'clock (after a sponsored breakfast) and ride to Port Macquarie.

For further details about the Great Australian Bike Ride contact the president of Taree Rotary Club, Kevin Sharp on 6552 6547. Alternatively visit www.greataustralianbikeride.org.au.