

Cycling for a cancer cure

BY STEPHANIE CHARALAMBOUS

A NINE day bike ride to cure cancer brought 26 cyclists through Traralgon last Tuesday, where they rested ahead of a long journey to Sydney.

The cyclists took part in Tour de Cure, which raises money for Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, National Breast Cancer Foundation and Camp Quality.

They ended their trip today after clocking up 1200 kilometres from Melbourne to Sydney in their bid to raise \$550,000.

Founders of the charity, Gary Bertwistle and Geoff Coombes developed the concept over a cup of coffee.

After cycling through America, Mr Coombes decided he wanted to start a bike ride to raise money for a cancer cure, and once he got some sponsors, and a few mates together who were willing to ride, they set off last year.

"Ten years ago, I thought about this and now together all of us can make a difference, whether you are riding in the Tour de Cure or showing your support through donations," Mr Coombes said.

"We consider our health a privilege and we feel honoured to be riding on behalf of three such worthwhile Australian charities that assist men, women and children affected by cancer.

"Although the ride is challenging, we enjoy the camaraderie, fitness and watching our fundraising efforts make a difference.

"This is a personal journey for many of our team members who have experienced cancer first-hand, having either lost a family member or a friend to the disease.

"They are a dedicated group who have committed to taking time out from their busy lives to ride for a cure."

Mr Bertwistle said the Tour de Cure had built a culture of focusing on men, women and children.

"This is to cure cancer and it won't stop until we cure it," Mr Bertwistle said.

"Our riders have to have that belief in their own hearts that we will."

Each Tour de Cure cyclist must commit to raising \$10,000 in donations to participate and must leave their families and business to participate in the nine day event.

They train aggressively in the months leading up to the cycle.

The 2008 Tour de Cure rode out of Melbourne on 31 March and cycled through Cranbourne, Traralgon, Lakes Entrance, Mallacoota, Merimbula, Batesmans Bay, Nowra, Wollongong before arriving in Sydney.

To donate to the Tour de Cure or participate in next year's event visit www.tourdecure.com.au.

