

New Idea

Ride FOR A CURE

VOLUNTEERS AND CELEBS ARE TAKING PART IN A CHARITY BIKE RIDE FOR CANCER FUNDS

Coffee may be a surprising health food, but recent research has shown your morning cup may have health-giving properties. For two cycling enthusiasts coffee was their drink of choice when the seed of an idea germinated. 'While riding across America 10 years ago, I dreamt up this idea to do a ride for charity,' Geoff Coombes, 34, says. It wasn't until he spoke of his dream out loud to fellow rider Gary Bertwistle that it took shape and the Tour de Cure charity ride was formed.

'I was sitting with Geoff over a cup of coffee when he mentioned he'd always wanted to do something for charity that involved cycling. I said I'd always wanted to ride from Brisbane to Sydney and that started it,' Gary says. 'We spent the next half hour putting down thoughts, then we started mentioning it to friends and it created its own momentum.'

In its first year, 23 Australian men and women will take part in the Tour de Cure charity ride that sets off from Brisbane on May 28. Over the following 10 days, including a rest day, the cyclists will ride for more than 1100km to reach Sydney by June 6. For the riders, the journey down Australia's east coast won't be so much about the beautiful scenery, as it will the challenge to get from one town to the next.

'I don't think the riders know how hard it's going to be,' Gary says. 'In Sydney, where we train, there are smooth roads and no head winds. The weather's usually pretty good - if it rains, you don't go out.

Just some of the dedicated riders and support staff who make up the Tour de Cure team.



The Tour de Cure team in training before the big ride.



healthy life

With Health Editor Jane Worthington

But we've got nine stages and the roads are going to be rough. There'll be a lot of head winds and we're at the mercy of the weather.'

Look out for the team - and a few surprise celebrity riders, such as Guy Leech, Gretel Killeen and Wayne Gardner, who may saddle up for parts of the ride - as they cycle through your town. The first 110km is being ridden from Brisbane to Tweed Heads. The next four days are spent peddling down through Tweed Heads, Ballina and Grafton until they reach Port Macquarie on June 2 for their rest day. The last four days are spent riding from Port Macquarie through Taree, Newcastle and Gosford, with the final 91km spent cruising into Sydney.

Team Tour de Cure hopes to raise \$300,000 this year, which will be split between the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, Camp Quality and the National Breast Cancer Foundation. 'Cancer doesn't discriminate - it's man, woman and child,' Gary says. 'Everyone has been touched by cancer so by splitting it up, the riders feel they're doing something for every member of the family.'

Susan Murray, CEO of the National Breast Cancer Foundation, says: 'The concept of the Tour de Cure is innovative. It's set to be a memorable event for the participants as well as the beneficiaries. We're looking forward to it being an annual event for a long time to come.'

FUN ON THE ROAD

● To inject some fun into the gruelling ride, at the end of each stage riders will be awarded a jersey to wear the following day. Jerseys will be awarded for things like 'best joke of the day'. The three jerseys represent the three cancer charities. Wayne Cooper is designing the pink jersey, Reg Mombassa from Mambo the blue jersey and Dinosaur Designs the yellow jersey.



Pledging your support

■ For information on the Tour de Cure, or to make a donation, visit www.tourdecure.com.au. For every donation you can download a copy of Golden Guitar winner Drew McAlister's song *Along for the Ride*, which was written especially for the Tour de Cure.

BY ERIN KISBY