



Charity kids' tour

By **Natalie Oliveri**

FORMER Olympic gold medalist Stephen Wooldridge has embarked on a 1100-kilometre ride to benefit children's charities.

Mr Wooldridge and his colleague, David Morris, who is also doing the ride, work for Colliers International and are based in Parramatta. Colliers have a team of four riders in the event.

The Tour de Kids is an annual cycling challenge starting in Albury, NSW, and will end in Centennial Park, Sydney, eight days later on April 6.

Money raised will go to various children's charities, with the principal charity being the Starlight Children's Foundation. In the seven-year history of the ride, more than \$2.6 million has been raised.

Mr Wooldridge was a professional cyclist before working with Colliers International. He said the ride was important to him because he was motivated to help sick children.

"It's not a race, it's a large group of us getting together to brighten the spirits of these wonderful kids," Mr Wooldridge said.

Mr Wooldridge said each rider was assigned a child they had to raise money for



Long ride: Stephen Wooldridge and David Morris preparing for their eight-day ride, which started on Sunday. **Picture:** Wolter Peeters

in order to fulfil a specific "wish".

"I'm riding for Jayden, a six-year-old boy who has arthrogyrosis, which means he has to get the bones in his torso broken every five to six months and set in casts. He's had that done since birth.

"His wish is to go on a family holiday to Dreamworld in Queensland."

Mr Morris said he was impressed by the Starlight Foundation when his son Andrew was hospitalised

with type 1 diabetes three years ago.

"They really entertained him and gave him things to do, like music and game consoles and computers," Mr Morris said.

He and Mr Wooldridge had been training for the ride, which will include a 30-kilometre ride up Victoria's Mt Hotham on day one.

Details: To donate to the fund-raising, visit the website tourdekids.org.au.