



# Cyclists head to Sydney the long way to help kids

COMMUNITY  
By DI THOMAS

A GROUP of 40 big-hearted businessmen leave Albury this morning on a 1100km charity bike ride in aid of the Starlight Foundation.

The 2008 Tour de Kids will be led by Olympic cycling champion Stephen Wooldridge and former Wallaby rugby player Warwick Waugh.

They will take the executives across the Victorian Alps to Lakes Entrance and north to Sydney, where the event ends at Centennial Park on Sunday.

Yesterday the riders met Brenden Aldridge, 19, of Kiewa, who has previously been diagnosed with melanoma and was granted his wish two years ago to meet

with Oscar-winning short film-maker Adam Elliot in Melbourne.

Mr Aldridge said the week with Elliot inspired him to consider a career in directing but right now he was working and trying to save money after gaining the all-clear from the disease.

"I still have a check-up every three months," he said.

Mr Waugh said he had ridden socially with some of the participants in the Tour de Kids before they had convinced him to tackle the 2007 Hobart to Thredbo ride.

"It's just a wonderful cause; marrying cycling with the social event of touring and helping the Starlight Foundation is a perfect marriage," he said.

"It's also important because every cent raised

goes to charity with a nominal amount of \$5000 being raised per rider to grant a single Starlight wish.

"On top of that the riders pay their own way and tackle between 20 and 25 hours a week training.

"It's not hard to have the motivation to do this. My wife Rebecca and I have three boys and we hope never to have to need the Starlight Foundation.

"The pain these families suffer with serious illness is much more than we deal with across the steepest climbs."

Mr Wooldridge is now an industrial property agent for Colliers International, one of the five major team sponsors of the ride.

He won gold at the Athens Olympics in the

4000m team pursuit.

"Colliers has had a strong connection with the ride since day one and I wanted to get involved this year because I was not racing," he said.

"Cycling to help others was the attraction. Both Warwick and I are used to the camaraderie of the trips away and this gives us a bit of a taste of that again."

Each rider has been given an individual wish and is part of a team in a ride loosely based on the Tour de France.

They will average between 150km and 160km daily on a ride which will also take in Cann River, Canberra and Bowral.

To sponsor a rider go to the website at [www.tourdekids.org.au](http://www.tourdekids.org.au)