



Riders complete Tour de Kids

By **Vas Venkatramani**

The riders of the Starlight Foundation's Tour De Kids were in Mittagong on Saturday for the final night of their arduous seven-day ride from Albury to Sydney.

The riders took part in an awards presentation night at Mittagong RSL on Saturday, before completing the final day of their ride up to Centennial Park in Sydney on Sunday night.

The group of 34 riders rode from Albury aiming to raise \$600,000 in donations to help the sick kids at Westmead Children's Hospital.

Among the riders to arrive in Mittagong at 3.40pm on Saturday were Athens Olympic team pursuit gold medallist Stephen Wooldridge and former Wallaby Warwick Waugh.

Mr Waugh explained his personal satisfaction for participating in the ride.

"It's an emotional homecoming because we go through a fair bit of adversity on this ride," he said.

"We draw on what we are going through because when we think about it, it doesn't come close to stacking up to what these kids and their families have to go through every day.

"It will be the end of a tough physical and mental week for us, but for them, we can only help them make it easier.

"Every day we've been asked the question: "Can I get through

the next day?" That's the same thing these kids are asking."

Mr Waugh said each rider had aimed to raise \$5000 each for the Starlight Foundation, which was possible by people making donations through the website.

"No donation is too small," he said.

"If people can understand what their donation can mean, then it will be a massive boost for the kids and for the charity.

"Every cent will go straight to the charity.

"The riders have had to pay

their own way through the ride, and all of us have been more than happy to."

Olympic cycling gold medalist Stephen Wooldridge retired competitively last year, and admitted he had hardly got back on the bike seat since the decision.

"It's been great to take part, be amongst these blokes for nearly a week and enjoy cycling to promote this cause," he said.

"It's not a race. In fact, it's something totally different to what sportspeople normally do, coming from a selfish athlete as most of us are.

"We race and train for ourselves, so to do something like this is immensely satisfying. It feels like putting something back into the community."

For more information or to make a donation to Tour De Kids, visit www.tourdekids.org.au and select the link on Sponsor a Rider.



RIDING THE GOOD RIDE: Starlight Foundation Tour De Kids riders Brent Dawson, Andrew Gibbons, Stephen Wooldridge (former Olympic gold medallist), David Allen, Warwick Waugh (former Wallaby) and Andrew Hourigan at Mittagong Motel on Saturday afternoon.