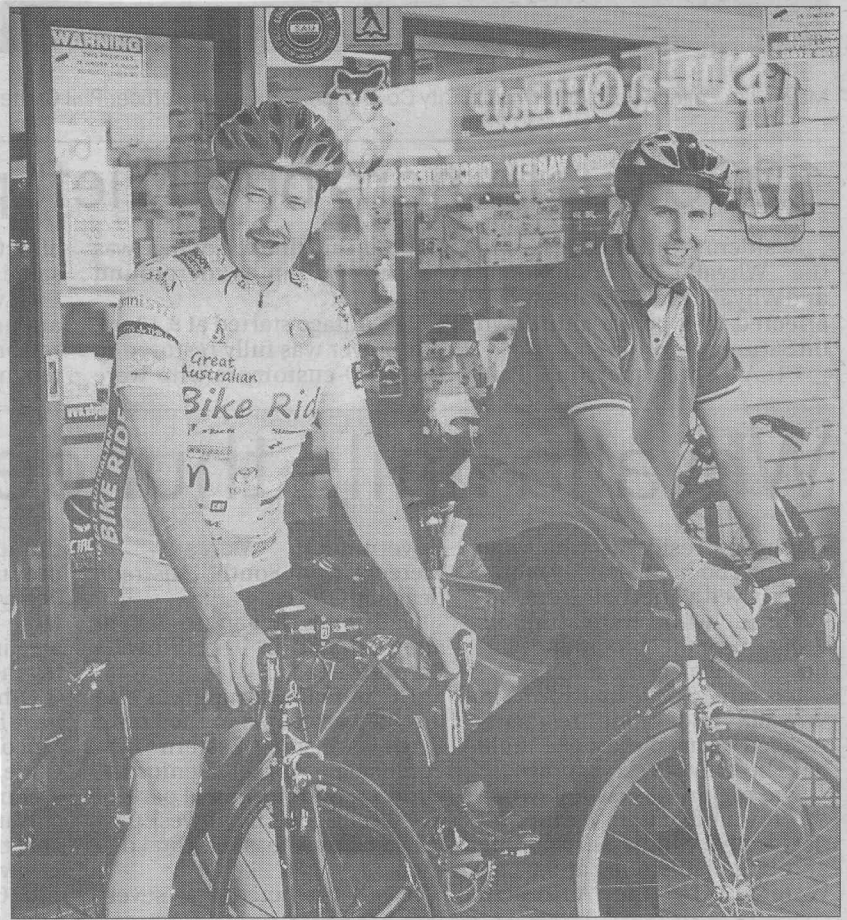


Great bike riders take a break



Jack Odgers and Damien Hyde were inspired to check out their bikes.



Ready to hit the road were cyclists: (back, from left) councillor Rick Santucci, Dick Wilson, Ross Andrewartha, Tom Brown, John Rundell, Rotary Club of Whyalla member Keith Sichler, (middle) Tony Caruana, Karen Brown, Gonny Rundell, Roberta Gordon, (front) ride director Geoff Kennedy, Leanne Ashworth of McDonalds and John Farugia.

Rotary Club of Whyalla members greeted riders taking part in the 18,000 kilometre Great Australian Bike Ride on Saturday, September 19.

The riders rode into town at 2.30pm with their support crew and vehicles, who made directly for the Foreshore Caravan Park where cabins were booked for their overnight stay and riders could indulge in a hot shower and a soft bed.

After trekking across the Nullarbor from Western Australia, the riders have been greeted with open arms in the many communities on the Eyre Peninsula.

The generosity of the people has been amazing according to Ride Director Geoff Kennedy.

On Saturday evening the riders and their support crew gathered at the Rotary Club of Whyalla's pavilion at Jubilee Park where a grand barbecue was provided.

Members and guests were regaled with stories from the riders about their adventures along the way.

After spending 182 days on the road there were plenty of stories to tell, from being invited to a Queensland outback Station and served huge quantities of home-baked scones and jam and fresh

cream to enduring heat, dust and rain storms.

McDonald Restaurants around Australia have been enthusiastic supporters of the ride and have provided their services no matter what time of day or night the riders have hit town.

Leanne Ashworth and her staff at Westland Shopping Centre McDonalds fortified the riders on Sunday morning with a complimentary breakfast before they took the road once again.

Councillor Rick Santucci farewelled the intrepid cyclists from Whyalla and wished them all the best for the next stage of their journey.

A couple of Rotary Club of Whyalla members were inspired to put on lycra and gear up their bikes after meeting the enthusiastic riders.

The Great Australian Bike Ride is an event organised through the Rotary Health Research Fund.

All monies raised along the way are donated towards research into mental health and other debilitating diseases such as multiple sclerosis.

The Great Australian Bike Ride began in Melbourne and will culminate there on Saturday, October 10, which is Mental Health Day.

22 Sept 2009