



WITH much enthusiasm and high spirits all round, the 20 dedicated cyclists set off from Forest Place, Perth on March 7 to cover 1,000 kms in eight days to raise funds for the SolarisCare Foundation and their Cancer Support Centres.

The Deputy Lord Mayor of Perth, Mr John Tognolini gave a warm and friendly speech to encourage the riders on their way. Dr David Joske, founder of SolarisCare and Head of Haematology at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital reminded the riders that the Red Sky Ride is not dissimilar to the journey so many of his cancer patients undertake, and that it is important to “not think about the miles, think about the smiles”.

The eight days of cycling can be summed up by the cyclists in a number of ‘H words’ – hard, hills, heat, humidity, head winds, humour followed with the great G words that

make it all worthwhile – good, great, guts, grit, gumption and grateful (for actually completing this marathon event).

The riders enjoyed hospitality from individuals, businesses, and service organisations like the local Lions clubs and Country Womens Associations throughout the towns they went through and the riders would like to express their sincere thanks to these very generous people. So far over \$290,000 has been raised with more money still to come in. A magnificent effort. In three years the Red Sky Ride has raised nearly \$750,000 so they are well on their way of reaching the \$1 million they have set out to achieve. Special thanks to the following Lions Clubs of Australind, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Denmark, Dunsborough, Harvey, Jandakot Lakes, Leeuwin, Mandurah, Nannup, Northam and Wagin for their assistance. Special thanks to our District Governor Neil

for greeting the riders in York. We hope you will all want to be involved in this event in 2011 to raise even more funds for cancer patients and their carers.

The riders were welcomed home in style by family and friends on March 14. The Deputy Lord Mayor of Perth, Mr John Tognolini was on hand again to welcome them home and commented on how well the Red Sky Ride website had been in keeping him informed of the journey over the past eight days.

A big thank you from all at SolarisCare Foundation to all the riders for their valiant efforts in being a part of such a wonderful event that raises awareness and funds for SolarisCare to enable them to continue their work in supporting cancer patients and their carers. If you wish to read the full blogs on the ride, go to [www.redskyride.com.au](http://www.redskyride.com.au).



*Christine Gilbert a Red Sky volunteer with Bridgetown Lions Club President Barbara Shaw. Below DG Neil Saunders address' riders*

## Red Sky Ride a magnificent effort

THE first half of day 1 was set at a fast pace, and the riders were very strong physically with lots of smiles all round. The second half saw the heat increase, the wind turn into a slight head wind/cross wind and the ‘dead roads’ started to suck the energy from the riders legs. On arrival in Harvey the relieved riders were welcomed by the Harvey Lions Club who had a feast waiting for them. President Robert St Duke and many Lions members had the burgers cooked, the onions frying, fresh salad, ice water, cake and big smiles, that restored the energy and smiles to the riders.

Day 2 started off uneventful until the lead support vehicle crew were pulled over for random breath testing just outside Harvey by the Harvey Police. With the all clear given and the cyclists not yet in sight, it was time to have

some fun with the riders. The Harvey Police were happy to oblige and pulled over 20 unsuspecting cyclists, two Taragos, and the Hertz truck for some “testing”. Thankfully they were all cleared with 0.0 readings and sent on their way. Great weather conditions prevailed and the riders arrived in Dunsborough 30 minutes early with still lots of energy left which is amazing since they were averaging 33kph.

Day 3 was another picture perfect WA day - blue skies, a tail wind and stunning scenery from Dunsborough to Augusta which included the sensational Boranup Forest and its tall Karri trees. Highlight for the riders was the morning tea stop at the Margaret River Chocolate Factory where the owners advised the riders that all the coffee, cakes and slices were free to them as a donation from the Margaret River Chocolate Factory in support of what they were doing. The riders will tell you it was the extensive training, strong muscles and super focus that got them up the hills so well but the real answer can be found in the consumed fuel from the Chocolate Factory!

Day 4 proved to be one of the toughest for the riders. Pain, suffering, hills, big hills, bigger hills and more pain and suffering. So goes the riders summary of the day. Spirits remained high, and everyone supported each other to overcome the mental endurance the hills were enforcing upon them. Highlights included a lovely lunch and generous donation by the Nannup Lions Club.



## 201W1-W2 NEWS: RED SKY RIDE



KANGAROOS and emus escorted the riders, beautiful karris trees, and the encouragement of a rest day ahead in beautiful Bridgetown.

Day 5 saw the riders enjoy their rest day by taking advantage of the free massages that the Natural Therapy and Wellness Centre were offering them. The Shire President for Bridgetown-Greenbushes Brian Moore also put on an afternoon tea to formally welcome the riders to Bridgetown and to acknowledge the great achievement they were all undertaking in raising money for cancer patients and their carers.

Day 6 was forecast to be extremely hot, so the dedicated riders left Bridgetown 45 minutes early to try and avoid the heat. The cloud cover also protected the riders from an even possibly hotter day. Lots of hills awaited the riders for the day, that they related this challenge to being on a rollercoaster – up, down, up down. At the top of every hill, the riders could see the next one coming. What great staying power they had to keep pedalling up and over each challenge.

One lady on the road between Bridgetown and Boyup Brook, pulled over to give a spontaneous donation which inspired the riders to keep up the pace. In Moodiarrup, the riders met up with Rose, a regular stalwart of the Red Sky Ride and she provided the riders with refreshments in the Moodiarrup Sports Complex and amazed everyone with her fundraising efforts of \$2,800.

A tired and relieved bunch pulled into Wagin in the lovely park below the Giant Ram and were welcomed by the Wagin Lions Club with cold drinks, sandwiches, cake and fruit. They also provided a donation.

Day 7 the riders awoke knowing that today was going to be their longest ride on the 8 day journey. They were to cover 187kms from Wagin to York - the longest distance ever ridden in one day on a Red Sky Ride.

Riders were expecting a nice back wind to send them on their journey, but unfortunately, they were met with strong head winds which meant a lot of mental and physical effort was required again. The strongest riders went to the front to protect the others and worked themselves into almost total exhaustion and in their words, they were in the “house of pain”. An unfortunate incident occurred later in the day when five of the riders fell from their bikes while manoeuvring over railway tracks near Beverley. Thankfully, no-one was seriously injured and they all managed to reach York to meet up with the Lions District Governor from District 201W2 Neil Saunders, his partner Dot, Shire President Pat Hooper. The Lions Club of Northam were also there with a welcoming sausage sizzle which all the riders hungrily devoured.

The final day and the riders were looking forward to getting home and seeing family and friends. A quick journey from York to Perth so they arrived earlier than expected, but there were plenty of people in Forest Place to greet them. The Deputy Lord Mayor of Perth, Mr



*Bridgetown Lion Geoff Carberry catches up with Red Sky rider Kim Gilbert and volunteer Deb Mackay. Below right: Blow in and get a negative result. Bottom: Riders leave the Perth CBD.*

John Tognolini was on hand again to welcome them home and commented on how well the Red Sky Ride website had been in keeping him informed of the journey over the past eight days. At the conclusion of the ride, over \$290,000 had been raised, and more funds are still to be counted. A big thank you from all at SolarisCare Foundation for your valiant efforts in being a part of such a wonderful event that raises awareness and funds for our organisation to continue our work in supporting cancer patients and their carers.

– Wendy Matthews.

