



Cystic Fibrosis sufferer tests his health against the highway in cycle trip

East coast ride to fight his disease

By DAVID JACKSON

TO THE average cyclist planning a 1900km ride over 34 days along the coast of Queensland, the challenge would be ensuring the fitness level was maintained for the duration of the journey.

For 33-year-old Cystic Fibrosis (CF) sufferer, Rick Faulks, it is ensuring that his body can stand up to the rigors of the journey and the health problems that comes with the disease.

CF is a degenerative condition that affects many of the body systems, including the lungs and digestion.

People diagnosed with CF live through daily physiotherapy and medications, among other treatment.

The fundraising charity cycle started in Cairns on July 27 and is planned to conclude in their home town of Ipswich on August 29.

Mr Faulks arrived in Ayr on Sunday morning at the end of day seven of his journey, travelling 85km in that section from Townsville.

Despite his health problems, which originally gave him a life span of five to seven years, Rick Faulks has always been active with sports and when he took up cycling about five years ago, it provided the opportunity for him to do something he has always wanted to do – raise awareness of CF.

He is being accompanied on the journey by his wife of 12 years, Megan and their twin children, Griffin and Bella, together with the couple's parents, who are driving the support vehicles.

For most of the journey, Rick is riding by himself, but he had company for the trip from Townsville to Ayr with family friend and former Ipswich resident, Cliff Brown of Townsville joining him for that leg.

He has also had good support from the Queensland Police Service – who Megan works for – with escorts being provided in a couple of centres, while police officers are planning to join Rick in some sections of the ride.

While they are undertaking the journey without any official sponsors, they have raised over \$13,000 through various fundraising activities prior to and during the journey and it is hoped they will be able to go over their aim of a \$20,000 total.

The family group is staying with friends during some overnight stops and camping in others, including the Burdekin, where they took advantage of the comfort stop in Home Hill before continuing their journey on Monday morning towards Bowen.

Mr Faulks, who has taken leave from his employment in Ipswich to undertake the trip, said he had been holding up well in his 440km journey to Ayr with the strong winds and mountains in some areas testing him out as they rode towards Ayr.

Several rest days have also been planned during the trip to allow him to adjust to changing weather conditions and mountainous areas where his health is tested.



Cystic Fibrosis cyclist, Rick Faulks (left) who is travelling from Cairns to Ipswich and Cliff Brown, who provided company on the journey to Ayr.