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GILLY GETS BEHIND RIDE FOR CANCER

Wicket-keeping superstar, Adam Gilchrist this morning lent his support to Western Australians with cancer, speaking at the Red Sky Business Breakfast at South Perth's Wesley College.

The breakfast is assisting the Red Sky Ride, in which 25 cyclists ride 1,000 kilometres together over seven days, to raise funds and awareness for SolarisCare Cancer Support Centres, which provide cancer patients with free complementary integrated therapies.

Red Sky Ride co-founder and participant, Kim Gilbert, was prompted to assist people in the community impacted by cancer when his 17-year-old niece lost her battle with the condition in 2007.

"I am very grateful for the free services provided by SolarisCare and have seen how much they help people with cancer to cope with the emotional and physical side effects of their treatment," he said.

"From personal experience, I can tell you the impact of cancer is enormous and whilst we always want a positive outcome, unfortunately this is not always the case."

"My commitment through the Red Sky Ride is to support SolarisCare in helping individuals and families affected by cancer to achieve the best quality of life while being treated."

This morning Gilchrist spoke of this year's event dedication to a family friend, Perth mother Simone Maree Timms, who died in 2010 due to leukaemia.

Simone accessed SolarisCare services while undergoing treatment to help her cope with the side effects and boost her wellbeing.

"As a community we are seeing more and more people affected by cancer and therefore those of us with the ability to assist organisations such as SolarisCare should do so," Kim said.

"The Red Sky Ride set out in 2008 to raise \$1,000,000 over five years for SolarisCare and we are aiming to raise \$400,000 in 2011."

Head of Haematology at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, Dr David Joske founded SolarisCare in 2001 to provide centres within hospitals where the supportive care needs of cancer patients and their families could be met.

"When everything is under a cloud – jobs, friendships, relationships, lifestyle and indeed life itself – we ask people diagnosed with cancer to negotiate hospital mazes, a whole new language, learn something about biology and then to decide on treatment," he said.

“SolarisCare Cancer Support Centres are a ‘soft place to land’, providing over 25,000 free treatments to cancer patients and their carers since 2001 and beginning to change the face of cancer care in Western Australia.”

“The Red Sky Ride is the largest funding contributor to SolarisCare and enables the organisation to continue and to expand access to its support services by establishing regional centres.”

Starting in Perth on 27 February, the 25 cyclists will ride through Harvey, Dunsborough, Augusta, Bridgetown, Wagin and York, finishing in Perth on 6 March.

For more information, visit www.redskyride.com.au

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Further information is available for download at www.redskyride.claritymediamanager.com.au including:

- The stories of individual riders
- Simone Maree Timms dedication story
- High-res images of the Red Sky Ride and SolarisCare
- Audio and video downloads

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