



The Red Sky riders negotiate a hill on the way into Bridgetown.

Long ride to aid cancer sufferers

HARRY LEITH

THEY have already topped their fundraising target but the Red Sky riders are pushing on in their quest to raise money for cancer sufferers and awareness about the disease.

Twenty-five cyclists arrived in Bridgetown last Wednesday looking forward to a rest day.

They were about halfway through a ride which has been an annual event for four years and now covers 1000km, up from 750km in the beginning.

The ride is the main source of funds for non-profit group SolarisCare, which offers therapies such as acupuncture, massage and reiki to cancer sufferers undergoing chemo and radiotherapy.

Spokesman Kim Gilbert said the ride began in 2008 with a target of \$1 million, but had already gone over that with hopes to raise \$400,000 this year alone.

"Our original fundraising goal was to raise \$1 million over five years and I think we're up to about \$1,057,000, so we're a fair way ahead of our target."

He said SolarisCare now ran three centres, two in Perth at Sir Charles Gairdner and St John of God hospitals, and one in Bunbury which opened in September.

Together the centres provided more than 400 free treatments a month.

Starting in Perth on February 27, the riders pedalled through Harvey, Dunsborough and Augusta before reaching Bridgetown and were due in Perth last Sunday after visiting Wagin and York.

Each of the riders has their own reasons for joining the cause. Mr Gilbert, who co-founded the Red Sky Ride, said he lost a niece to cancer.

He and another group of dedicated individuals will likely be back for a fifth year in 2012 when SolarisCare celebrates its 10th anniversary. March 9, 2011

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