

'Turbo' Tom's great desert adventure

'Turbo' Tom is set for his next great adventure in aid of charity ... a 2000-kilometre cycle ride traversing the Great Sandy, Gibson and Tanami deserts, passing through some of Australia's hottest and remotest terrain.

When he was in his late sixties, Tom Brown earned his 'Turbo' moniker after completing two hundred kilometre survival walk, living off the bush for ten days and amazing everyone with his stamina and fitness – and out walking many younger participants. Then in his 70th year 'Turbo' Tom completed an 18,000-kilometre Rotary-organised charity bike ride circumnavigating Australia in seven months, raising \$40,000 for mental health research.

Now at seventy three, he's preparing to set off alone on **'The Sea to Centre Challenge'** to raise funds for **The Fred Hollows Foundation's Aboriginal Health Program**.

'Apart from supporting a much-needed Aboriginal health program, I hope to inspire older folk to get out there and live life to the full. As I have proved, age is not the issue ... it's the mental attitude that matters.'

A Rotary member for 28 years, Tom's epic journey will begin at Port Headland and travel across the Northern Deserts to Alice Springs, crossing the famed Canning Stock Route at Kunawarritij on the way.

The route he will take passes the Telfer Gold and Copper mine owned by Newcrest Mining and the remote Aboriginal communities of Punmu, Kunawarritiji, Kiwirrkurra, Walungurru (Kintore), Mt Liebig and Papunya.

The tracks he will traverse were built between 1947 and 1963 by Len Beadell who made the roads of the Central Desert area in support of the activities at Woomera Rocket Range.

Already a number of sponsors have jumped on board with support.

Rightway Industrial P/L, a large industrial plant maintenance company in Western Australia, is supplying a fully-equipped Toyota Landcruiser support

'The Sea to Centre Challenge'

vehicle and driver.

Tom's latest adventure is being backed by Rotary, who are offering administration support and management of all donations received.

Originally, Tom was planning to cycle the iconic Canning Stock Route in 2011 but Mother Nature intervened. As a member of Mission Beach Rotary, he responded to the urgent call to help organise the clean-up following the Category 5 Cyclone Yasi which caused devastating havoc in Far North Queensland. Several months were spent helping local communities get back on their feet, leaving him with little time to prepare for the event.

However, Tom did manage to drive the route later in the year and it was then that he got the idea to revise the adventure into **'The Sea to Centre Challenge'**.

Also last year, Tom was presented with Rotary's Paul Harris Fellowship for services to the community.

Tom is seeking sponsorship from the corporate sector as well as Rotary clubs and individuals for his **'Sea to Centre Challenge'**, with all money raised to be managed by Mission Beach Rotary Club of which Tom is a member.

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The Fred Hollows
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