



Diary – Day 7

Friday, 28 October 2011

Well, we're there!

Seven days and about 1,100km after first clicking into the pedals in Toowoomba, we have finally reached the sanctuary of Emerald.

It is hard to describe the emotions as we rolled into the Explorer's Inn this afternoon. Unless you've been at all the events, endured the fatigue and witnessed the thousands of lives changed by the 2011 Ride for Rural Kids it's hard to comprehend the scale of the effort or achievement.

I am not just talking about the effort from the riders. The entire support team has given everything possible and then some to ensure a fantastic outcome from Ronald McDonald House Charities.

Harry and Di (mum and dad) have taken care of our every need, as they have for our entire lives. Dick Coughlan, Maree and Darren Devenish have been monumental. The Ride for Rural Kids wouldn't be the same without them.

We have only known Col and Debbie Steinke a week, but they feel like family. If Ruralco ever commits to another ride I certainly hope they are part of it.

Cameron Beamish and Jaxon Morris have been there to resolve every issue, keep the logistics under control and just as importantly provide good humor.

Then there is the man who brought the star quality to the Ride for Rural Kids, but not the star attitude - Mr Lee Kernaghan.

A week ago I was a fan of the musician. Today, I'm a fan of the human being.

Like all of us, Lee's patience and resilience has been thoroughly tested this week. However, he's responded with class and changed thousands of young lives in central Queensland. His status and capacity to move people will also make a lasting difference to Ronald McDonald House Charities and the families of sick country kids right across the state.

Thank you Lee. It has been an honor to travel with you.

In terms of today's stage from Rolleston to Emerald the riding was a pleasure. It may sound ridiculous, but the 140km went by too quickly.

We comfortably negotiated the Staircase Range, which so many locals spoke of with a sense of awe. We then dropped into Springsure where we were met by Tim Maguire from Maguires Real Estate & Livestock and his good friends, Mark and Terry. The trio rode the remaining 70km to Emerald with us. It was great to share the road and the experience of finishing with them.

All that remains is tonight's Lee Kernaghan concert at the Emerald Showgrounds. It promises to be an incredible spectacle and memorable celebration.

They say that what happens on tour should stay on tour. But just maybe I'll have to file a report tomorrow.

Gerard Sutton
Cyclist, Ride for Rural Kids