



Bikers head to the red centre for good cause

Hundreds of bike riders from all states in Australia will join the 2010 Black Dog Ride to Alice Springs departing on Sunday, 5 September simultaneously from Sydney and Perth, to raise awareness about depression.

The bike ride is a major initiative for the Black Dog Institute's *Exercise Your Mood Week* being held across Australia from 11 to 19 September.

The bike riders are assembling at two starting points on Sunday 5 September- Yahava Kofeeworks in the Swan Valley in W.A. and at Deus Cafe in Camperdown, Sydney, NSW, before the two groups link-up at Port Augusta on day four of the gruelling 4000km trip. The Sydney group will be flagged away by renowned Australian rock legend Angry Anderson.

The Black Dog Bike Ride was originally launched from Perth last year. The Ride has grown to encompass a nation-wide effort with riders from all over Australia converging at the red centre on 11 September, the starting date for *Exercise Your Mood Week*, to recognise the impact that depression has in today's society.

Black Dog Ride Director, Steve Andrews stated that depressive illnesses affected over a million people each year, or 20 per cent of Australia's population. "Depression is the third largest individual health problem in Australia after heart disease and stroke," Steve said. "However, most people don't speak about their illness because they don't wish to be perceived as weak. We are hoping that through this ride, people will begin to understand that the biggest struggle is in fact speaking about your problems, and from there, you can then get some help."

Angry Anderson has openly struggled with depression all his life and agreed to be a Black Dog Ride Ambassador as a means of breaking down the barriers. "I vowed years ago that I was going to be part of the solution and not the problem and as such I believe that this ride provides an opportunity for people to join forces and spread the message of hope throughout Australia and especially in rural locations," Angry said. "This seven day ride is applicable to all genders and ages and hence we encourage you to either join the ride or just simply support the cause by logging onto the website www.blackdogride.com.au."

In 2010 the funds raised will be allocated to *Exercise Your Mood Week* a national initiative by the Black Dog Institute which is a not-for-profit, educational, research, clinical and community-oriented facility offering specialist expertise in depression and bipolar disorder.

Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute, Professor Gordon Parker, emphasised today the importance of regular exercise for maintaining good mental health. Research has shown the benefits of exercise include a reduction in the levels of stress hormones, improved sleep, fitness and energy.

The Black Dog Institute will have participants on the bike ride and at different locations (Grenfell NSW on Sunday evening 5 September, Hay NSW on 6 September, Alice Springs NT on 10 September and Glen Helen NT on 11 September) will conduct education seminars with the support of Lions.

Contacts:

Black Dog Ride Director: Steve Andrews (M) 0408 868 500

Black Dog Institute Media & Public Relations Manager: Ian Dose (M) 0419 618 606