

It is hard to describe what it actually feels like to pushbike from Ubobo to Calliope. It is however, challenging, exhilarating, and at times hard!

With a good support crew (Rodney and Shayne), a good pilot (Debbie and Cindy in the new fire truck), a good photographer (Kaye), and a good fruit cake on board (Eunice) it was, when you look back – easily done.

What made it so easy was the fact that we already knew how generous people had been in supporting their fire brigade - generous to the tune of \$1419.05!

To earn this, all we did was tell people we were riding the 55km for the BVRFB and would they like to sponsor us? “If your house or property was burning, who could save you but the Boyne Valley Rural Fire Brigade” Strangely enough, most people wanted their property saved, but to let their house burn!! Perhaps a syndrome of seeing all those lush houses in town and thinking “Wow maybe with the money .....just maybe!!!!”

We set off at 8.50 am from the Ubobo Hall with a small but enthusiastic crowd to wave off us. Usually we attract a waving hand but this time there was shouts of good luck from cars coming towards us and lots more waving!

The road is undulating; some areas are testing. “Blacksoil” was easy this time as Debbie was out front so we knew we could stay on the tar and not get run over! “Gordon’s leap” above the culvert at the dairy is one to approach with strategy.

By the time we got to the first railway crossing – 14km, it was time for a fruit cake break. The man at the bike shop had told us “Baked beans on buttered toast for breakfast (maybe for propulsion!!), and fruit cake at your breaks for slow release energy”. Debbie informed us we had got up to about 22km/hr, Rodney informed us that the truck that passed us at Cluden was one of many!

Well if we thought we picked a day where there wouldn’t be trucks – it wasn’t the right day! All the trucks that usually pass us of a weekday were on the go, and then some more! Nearly all of them were going our way and nearly all caught up to us where there were unbroken lines!

The next section through to Futter is quite hilly but very beautiful. The last hill before the last railway crossing we both have a new appreciation for! Cycles are of no danger black stripe wallabies there! We enjoyed the break at Futter and learned from Debbie we had hit 25km/hr, but it certainly wasn’t up that hill!

As we left, Kaye could be found in the middle of Futter Creek Bridge taking photos of our parade coming across. The boys must have picked her back up again, because she was there at our next stop!

The hill at Moore’s Road is also a shock to the system, short and steep. Apparently Rodney told a couple of the truck drivers “You haven’t got a patch on these girls in quick gear changes going up this hill!!”

By the end of the Monto Gladstone Road and only 4km to go we were way too early! It didn’t take as long as we had planned. A crowd gathered around us, people coming out to see where we were up to and others stopping on their way in.

We arrived at the Callope Railway Hotel at 11.50 a.m. to a grand welcome from all our well wishers. A ute soon approached which looked to be driven by yellow and red balloons. It actually was Erin and somewhere in there was also Michelle Lester and twenty helium balloons of which about 6 were waving out the door because they wouldn’t all fit in!!!

The publican had been told there would be twenty of us or so! We were overwhelmed by the support we got. Over 30 people witnessed the presenting of a huge cheque made by Helen from the bank of hard peddling to Debbie!.

Debbie and Cindy sold raffle tickets throughout the hotel in a huge red emperor and coral trout donated by Trevor and Sue Zielke. With the proceeds of the raffle added, the fire brigade will have a good start to their long awaited shed.

As for Helen and I, we will be back on the road from Tuesday, doing our usual 20km practise run. Practise for what you say? Maybe that will be another story!