



MEDIA RELEASE

Subject: Shepherds Australia PTSD Awareness Baton Ride

I am writing to you on behalf of Shepherds Australia Foundation.

On the 15th of February 2017 we will be departing the front steps of the Parliament of Victoria in Melbourne on a motorcycle ride around Victoria and returning back to Parliament House on the 19th.

The ride will consist of 5 legs with overnight stopovers at Hamilton, Swan Hill, Bright and Sale. We hope to be visiting with people on our journey to discuss our mission and provide resources where possible to provide options to those in need.

A full copy of the itinerary is attached.

There will be a core rider group making the full journey with riders and clubs joining us at various stages to accompany us in bringing life to this event.

After leaving Sale we will be heading to Phillip Island, the National Vietnam Veterans Museum. We are aiming to arrive between 11:00 and 11:30am for a 2 hour stopover. It is here we will hold the formalities for the ride. We will also be formally presenting the Shepherds Australia PTSD Awareness Ride Baton.

This has been hand made and engraved by Returned Service personnel at Richmond RAAF Base in NSW. The Baton holds great significance as it demonstrates the need to "share the burden" as you would in a relay race. You cannot win a relay alone, we must be willing to "share the burden" and each do our bit.

We are hoping to have between 500 to 1000 riders meet at the Museum to ride with us for the final leg back into Melbourne.

The purpose of this ride is to:

1. Raise awareness of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) amongst our Returned Service and frontline Emergency Service personnel;
2. Raise awareness of the tragic and unacceptable suicide numbers amongst these groups;

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3. Provide information to communities of resources available to assist not only those suffering from these conditions, but also their friends and families to enable them to identify and support their loved ones; and
4. Raise through donations, \$20,000 for Whiskey's Wish, a Not for Profit that trains specialist assistance dogs to work with those suffering from these conditions. Work with assistance dogs has saved many lives and we hope, through this work, to give sufferers of PTSD and TBI an alternative to prematurely taking their own lives.
5. To have the Baton carried around Australia in the future.

We hope to achieve this by not simply canvassing corporations and companies for \$20,000. Although this will provide great assistance to Whiskey's Wish, it will not bring the required attention to this tragic situation. We hope to inspire 20,000 people to donate \$1 each and in doing so, demonstrate to the media and government the national support for those who have given their everything only to return home still at war inside.

We are reaching out to yourself in the hope that you may wish to join this event and be able to assist Shepherds Australia and be part of something we believe to be both very significant and special.

My Co-Founder, John (JC) Curran lives on Phillip Island at Rhyll and we would greatly appreciate the opportunity for John to meet with you to discuss any opportunities that exist to work together to ensure the success of this event.

We look forward to speaking with you further.

Both my and John's contact details are:

Dean (Bear) Marks 0447 061 065

John (JC) Curran 0419 368 157

For more details about the event please visit our website under coming events, PTSD Baton Ride.

Kind Regards

Dean (Bear) Marks
Founder – Shepherds Australia

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Leg 1 – 15 Feb 2017 – Depart 10:00am

- 1 Ride: from Melbourne to Geelong 74.9 km
 - 2 Ride: from Geelong to Torquay 22.1 km
 - 3 Ride: from Torquay to Lorne 45.7 km
 - 4 Ride: from Lorne to Apollo Bay 47.5 km
 - 5 Ride: from Apollo Bay to Peterborough 114 km
 - 6 Ride: from Peterborough to Warrnambool 49.4 km
 - 7 Ride: from Warrnambool to Hamilton 100 km
- Accommodation: Overnight Stop at Hamilton 1 night

Leg 2 – 16 Feb 2017 – Depart 09:00am

- 1 Ride: from Hamilton to Ballarat 176 km
 - 2 Ride: from Ballarat to Ararat 92.6 km
 - 3 Ride: from Ararat to Stawell 31.1 km
 - 4 Ride: from Stawell to Horsham 66.7 km
 - 5 Ride: from Horsham to Swan Hill 228 km
- Accommodation: Overnight Stop at Swan Hill 1 night

Leg 3 – 17 Feb 2017 – Depart 09:00am

- 1 Ride: from Swan Hill to Kerang 61.0 km
 - 2 Ride: from Kerang to Echuca 94.4 km
 - 3 Ride: from Echuca to Shepparton 70.9 km
 - 4 Ride: from Shepparton to Benalla 62.5 km
 - 5 Ride: from Benalla to Wangaratta 47.1 km
 - 6 Ride: from Wangaratta to Wodonga 68.9 km
 - 7 Ride: from Wodonga to Albury 7.9 km
 - 8 Ride: from Albury to Beechworth 45.3 km
 - 9 Ride: from Beechworth to Myrtleford 28.0 km
 - 10 Ride: from Myrtleford to Bright 34.0 km
- Accommodation: Overnight Stop at Bright 1 night

Leg 4 – 18 Feb 2017 – Depart 09:00am

- 1 Ride: from Bright to Omeo 108 km
 - 2 Ride: from Omeo to Nowa Nowa 124 km
 - 3 Ride: from Nowa Nowa to Lakes Entrance 21.5 km
 - 4 Ride: from Lakes Entrance to Bairnsdale 38.9 km
 - 5 Ride: from Bairnsdale to Sale 68.1 km
- Accommodation: Overnight Stop at Sale 1 night

Leg 5 – 19 Feb 2017 – Depart 09:00am

- 1 Ride: from Sale to Traralgon 53.6 km
- 2 Ride: from Traralgon to Mirboo North 46.1 km
- 3 Ride: from Mirboo North to Wonthaggi 63.4 km
- 4 Ride: from Wonthaggi to Phillip Island 24.7 km

Arrive approx. 11:30 – 12:00

Ceremony and Gathering at National Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island **2 hrs**

RIDE TO PARLIAMENT - 5 Ride: from Phillip Island to Melbourne 124 km

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