

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Bishop biking for a benefit

As if leading one of the most far-flung Catholic dioceses in Australia wasn't tough enough, one Australian bishop has signed up for a very different kind of challenge.

Bishop of Wilcannia-Forbes Columba Macbeth-Green has joined Catholic Mission's Ride to Reach Out, a 250km cycle through the heart of Cambodia, to raise funds and awareness for the work of the mission organisation.

The 12-day experience, from 15-26 November this year, will immerse the Bishop and up to 19 other participants in the beauty and culture of one of Southeast Asia's most stunning regions, while also allowing them to make a practical difference to the lives of people in need.

But is one of Australia's youngest bishops ready for the challenge? 'Prayer is going to have to help me through it,' he says with a laugh. 'I don't know how I'll handle the humidity, but I'm fairly confident because it's not a sprint. I'm just looking forward to it. With God, you can do anything.'

The journey will take participants from the breathtaking temples of Angkor Wat and Siem Reap, to the calm splendour of Tonle Sap lake and eventually into the bustling heart of the capital Phnom Penh.

Bishop Columba is a keen cyclist, and while he hasn't taken to the two wheels for a while, five months out from the adventure he says his training is unlikely to involve traversing his 414,398-square-kilometre diocese.

'It's too flaming big! Combined with the heat, and the magpies, I think I'll stick to night riding,' he says. 'I haven't ridden in a while, but this gives me a reason to get back into it. I've got a goal now.'

Besides the obvious physical benefits of cycling 250 kilometres in a tropical climate, Bishop Columba will have a first-hand opportunity to meet and work with some of the beneficiaries of programs supported by Catholic Mission, of whom he is the liaison bishop.

'To actually go to the communities supported by Catholic Mission I think is really important,' says Bishop Columba. 'To put faces, names to people at the other end of giving ... makes it real, and that's the important thing for me is to be able to connect with the people.'

Bishop Columba has already planned a suite of fundraising activities to meet his individual targets. 'In my own diocese, we have some functions planned. We have a trivia night scheduled and we'll try to get the schools involved,' says Bishop Columba, who says his specialty is geography.

There are still limited spaces available to join Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green in this rare opportunity. For more information on how you can join or support the Bishop and others on the Ride to Reach Out, visit catholicmission.org.au/inspiredadventures.

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