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Epic cycling journey pays off for diabetes research

Recently returned from his epic 3700 kilometre cycling journey throughout Australia, Wycheproof farmer and footballer James Coatsworth today made his way to Melbourne to present Diabetes Victoria with \$23,500; funds he raised to support vital diabetes research and children's diabetes camps.

Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett thanked James for raising awareness about the seriousness and complexity of diabetes. Mr Bennett said that James' dedication was both humbling and inspiring, clearly demonstrating that diabetes shouldn't stop anyone from being physically active and achieving their dreams.

In July this year, James embarked on a bike ride from the smallest registered mountain in the world, Mt. Wycheproof, along some of Australia's most beautiful roads for 3700 kilometres to Cape York, at the northern tip of Queensland. Calling this trip: *Top to Tip: 3700kms for Diabetes*, James rode with a point to prove. Living with type 1 diabetes himself, the former playing coach of Wycheproof-Narraport in the North Central Football League was determined to "show others that diabetes isn't a barrier to anything, big or small," he said.

James was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes two years ago. Then aged 30, he showed many of the classic symptoms: "I was so thirsty I thought my tongue and lips were made of sandpaper. I couldn't drink enough water, and I felt terrible – lethargic and tired," James said. Getting over the initial shock of the diagnosis was very difficult for James. "It took me six months to get my head around the fact that I have to live with this for the rest of my life."

Determined not to let diabetes stop him living his life, James decided to use his positive outlook to help others. "The bike ride is over, but I haven't finished. I want the money to go towards helping children with diabetes and research," he said. "This is probably just the start of it, to be honest."

Diabetes Victoria relies on the generosity of caring community members and supporters to help fund diabetes education programs, children's diabetes camps and awareness-raising activities. Last financial year, the leading charity and peak consumer body made a \$1.3m contribution to the Diabetes Australia Research Program and an additional contribution of \$460,000 to support the Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes.

*We **support, empower and campaign** for all Victorians affected by diabetes.*

For more information:

Lyn Curtis 0411 019 924 lcurtis@diabetesvic.org.au
Sybille Taylor 0408 102 344 staylor@diabetesvic.org.au