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Rostrevor College (est. 1923)  
ABN 63 001 070 495

A CATHOLIC ALL BOYS' DAY & BOARDING  
COLLEGE IN THE EDMUND RICE TRADITION  
Reception to Year 12

## MEDIA RELEASE

17-3-2021

### 4400km Mission to Help PTSD sufferers

The 2020 Principal of Rostrevor College, Brian Schumacher, and his brother Ian, will embark on a monumental 4400km bicycle ride from Fremantle to Sydney between April 1 and May 15, raising money and awareness for Integra Service Dogs Australia.

Integra dogs are specially trained canine guardians for former and serving defence force veterans and first responders who are suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The Coast-to-Coast ride is being supported by ISDA Patrons the Governor General of Australia, the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC and Mrs Linda Hurley, as well as Integra Dogs Ambassador and Olympic cycling champion Anna Meares.

Brian and Ian, both in their fifties, have several family members in the defence and police force and understand well the pressures they face.

"This Coast-to-Coast ride is a good opportunity to support an organisation which is doing wonderful work for veterans and first responders who have served Australia with distinction and are now suffering from PTSD," Brian says. "This our way of saying thank you for your service."

"The impact of providing vulnerable people with a support dog that gives them renewed purpose, greater confidence and unconditional support is life changing – and it saves lives."

Integra Dogs are trained to become emotionally tuned to their handler and provide unconditional support through the trauma and stresses of everyday life. It costs approximately \$30,000 to train, match and place an Integra Dog with a veteran or first responder (such as a former police officer or emergency services worker) suffering from PTSD.

Brian's decision to ride for Integra Service Dogs Australia came not long after the bushfires that ravaged so many communities over the 2019/2020 summer when it was expected that many first responders would themselves suffer long term trauma associated with their work. He says the onset of COVID-19 has added to the toll on these important groups of Australians who live and work in every town and city across the country.

The two-man team will ride approximately 120km a day travelling through many small communities and towns along the way in WA, SA, Victoria, the ACT and NSW. In SA, they will visit Ceduna, Streaky Bay, Wudinna, Kimba, Wirrabara, Balaklava, Wellington and Keith.

His Excellency, Mr Hurley, who officially launched the Integra Coast-to-Coast ride and fundraising effort in late March, is encouraging people to follow Brian and Ian's daily program on the Integra website and learn more about the charity.

“Over the course of 44 days in the saddle, Brian and Ian will help raise awareness of the importance of mental health among those who serve our community and the role that assistance dogs can play in supporting these individuals in managing their complex physical, mental and emotional injuries,” his Excellency said.

Another Integra Dogs Ambassador is Para-athlete World Champion Matty Brumby who will meet Brian and Ian upon their arrival in Adelaide on Wednesday April 28 to celebrate the half-way point and highlight the work of Integra Dogs in SA.

Brian, who has led Rostrevor College for the past three years, is currently on secondment as the Regional Director for Edmund Rice Education Australia, providing support and guidance to Principals from several Colleges in SA, WA and the NT, including Rostrevor College, CBC and St Paul’s in Adelaide.

Brian will be joined on that day’s ride into Adelaide by Rostrevor College students, staff and other supporters of Integra Dogs.

His passion for endurance adventures saw him ride almost 1000km from Hay, NSW, to Maitland, NSW, in January last year in support of families who had lost someone through suicide. Brian and Ian lost their sister, Marilyn to suicide in 1997 after a long battle with mental illness. Thus, the brothers have a passion for supporting mental health initiatives and for getting behind causes like Integra Service Dogs Australia.

“There’s something liberating about being on a pushbike. You get a very different perspective of the country and you meet the most amazing people. Whenever you stop in a town for a cup of coffee or a bite to eat, people will always come up for a chat and ask you what you are doing and why,” Mr Schumacher said.

The brothers are seeking to raise funds through corporate sponsorship and public donations for Integra Service Dogs Australia. Donations can be made via this link: [www.isda.com.au/coast-to-coast-ride/](http://www.isda.com.au/coast-to-coast-ride/)

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