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To mark National Stroke Week (August 2-8) Victorian NDIS participant, Tom Quick has set himself an epic endurance challenge – to cycle 9000 kilometres on his recumbent trike to the four furthest points of Australia, raising greater awareness about stroke, particularly in young people.

Tom, 27, who survived a stroke at age 12, and as a result, has limited mobility down the right side of his body, said he is ready and pumped to start his ambitious challenge on August 2, his 28th birthday.

“I’ll start my ride at Steep Point, in Western Australia, then I’ll cross the Nullarbor and head through Victoria to Wilsons Prom,” he said.

“Then from Wilson’s Prom, I’ll continue on up to Sydney, then further up to Cape Byron and end my ride at Cape York, in Far North Queensland.”

An ambitious and potentially gruelling cycling challenge, Tom is certainly the perfect ambassador to raise greater awareness about stroke, prevention, and how the NDIS can provide supports to participants so they can achieve their goals, big or small.

“As I travel around Australia, I want people to know stroke can happen at any age, so I’ll be stopping at various towns to volunteer to speak at schools and with community groups – I’ll talk to anyone who will listen,” he said with a smile.

According to the Stroke Foundation, each year up to 600 Australian children experience stroke; one in 20 die and more than half of survivors experience long-term impairments – statistics Tom said people need to know.

“I am also passionate about promoting stroke research, social inclusion and breaking down preconceived perceptions about disability,” he said.

“Social inclusion is something I’ve struggled with in the past, especially with COVID restrictions, so I want to share my story to grow support and increase education about people afflicted by stroke and the challenges we face in society.”

With an obvious will to show stroke survivors are capable of anything, Tom’s 9000 kilometre cycle won’t be the first epic journey he has faced.

In 2014, he tackled the Kokoda Trail with dad, Clive, a few mates and some volunteers. Both said it was an emotional moment when they finally completed the gruelling trek, but one they would be forever proud of and never forget.

“I’m a big believer in the power of mateship. It’s what got me through the years since my stroke, and to the end of the Kokoda trail,” Tom said.

“I really don’t like the use of the word ‘disabled’. Everyone is capable of setting themselves a goal to do something no matter how big or small it seems.

“I’m looking to empower other stroke survivors to strive to do something they would love to do. I’ve worked for four years to make my Four Points of Australia cycle a reality. Now, I’m just counting the days down.”

To grow even more mateship, Tom said he would love to invite others to join him on what he enthusiastically calls his “epic journey”.

“It might just be cycling through your local town with me, or accompanying me for a few kilometres down the road as I leave town, or maybe riding with me even further. Whatever way you would like to participate I’d be grateful for support,” he said.

“I believe no one has ever cycled a recumbent trike to the four furthest points of Australia before, let alone anyone with my capabilities, so when I make it, and set a record, I hope everyone can join me and be part of it because together we can make a difference.”

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